

RARA ACTION

Last night we made a fire attack at the 'Thermo Shell Centrum' in Hilversum, using two jerry cans of petrol and incendiary devices.

The radical solidarity campaign with the struggle in South Africa didn't come to a standstill. In Holland this campaign has been continuous and also in other Western European countries (FRG, Denmark) the number of actions is increasing.

In spite of that we can state that as far as Holland is concerned this campaign is faltering and may reach a crisis. At the moment almost all the attention of the radical movement is aimed at the Shell blockade organized by SuZA. A course of action that has its own background but is threatening to backfire.

We support the call for action against Shell in general. But we think this blockade action has drastically conformed to the social democratic politics (of the committees) and thus turned out to be a strongly defensive position.

With this attack and communique we want to contribute to the discussion on strategy and perspective of radical revolutionary anti-apartheid struggle as a part of the struggle on all aspects of life.

First we want to clearly state that we are not opposed to the idea of a blockade, we also think that actions can be spectacular. A blockade can be effective in that it is accessible for all people to take part in. Our criticism is not against this choice of action, a blockade is no better or worse than a firebomb. Setting different kinds of actions against each other is a false contradiction. What we are concerned about is the aim of building up and increasing our strength now and also in the long term.

SuZA says their aim is "to change the political climate a little bit." In our view the struggle means more than developing a tactical concept that lasts just three days. The idea of just damaging the image of Shell is not enough to be effective. We think that everybody should know already what apartheid is. It is also known that the Dutch state has a strategic interest in maintaining the apartheid system or at most adjusting it a little bit. And that the same state creates the political and economic conditions for multinationals like Shell to be able to operate.

Shell's collaboration with the apartheid regime has been known for a long time, so not much damage can be done to its image anymore. A large action against Shell know, should be the expression of the

combined experiences of the long militant anti-apartheid struggle.

It should build on a history whereby the development of the political contents are central and the aim is to get, more and more, a better view on the perspective.

Of course the chosen object of the blockade is not without history. In the last few years Shell has been the target of many militant actions and campaigns with the aim of putting the stamp on Shell as one of the accomplices of the apartheid regime and to damage them as much as possible. Alongside these actions there have been discussions about what the resistance can mean for us and to develop more cohesion and continuity. SuZA doesn't build on this necessary development.

An illustration of this took place during the first conference about the action when the SuZA explicitly refused to take over the demand "Free Rene".

The discussion about this was neutralized with the remark that they also didn't demand "Free Mandela". Thus completely ignoring the fact that Rene had been convicted of taking part in/or organizing actions which are supported by large parts of the radical movement. He has been accused of membership in groups which have, in their publications/communiques, explicitly associated themselves as being part of that movement.

On the other hand, the SuZA itself, at the same conference, didn't criticize the social democratic groups and organizations which also took part in the blockade.

Without any form of discussion they forced their non-violence on all other people, by threatening a possible social democratic withdrawal.

A choice for non-violence on this level, isn't a choice which does justice to the necessity of anti-parliamentary politics on all levels.

It is served to us without discussion.

To state that a confrontation with the police should at all times be avoided, because "riots would hurt us more than they would Shell" (according to SuZA), denies the political character of the police.

The choice of Van Thijn (the Social Democratic mayor of Amsterdam) to make use of the police, if the blockade works out effectively, is not only a question of public order. It's an attempt to force the blockade initiative within social-democratic margins, i.e., to make it ineffective. Because radical, revolutionary politics and so-called public order are incompatible.

One of the aims of SuZA is conscience raising and discussion.

A picture is given of Shell being the total enemy, the big monster.

For us it is not clear how this could lead to more consciousness.

The most important aspect for a useful discussion about the anti-apartheid struggle is missing. Neither Shell nor any other multinational is exclusively responsible for the maintenance of apartheid and repression.

Apartheid and repression still exist thanks to the support of the Western States, and even more than that:

"Apartheid isn't some kind of civilization that differs from the Western kind, indeed it's the rough, unpolished side of it. Apartheid isn't a strain on Western civilization, it's the very core of it. Apartheid is the lens through which one can see all of it, a micro cosmos, a revelation of what the Western civilization really is." (According to Cedric Mayson, prisoner of the apartheid regime).

Thus anti-apartheid struggle should be pointed against the politics of the Dutch state.

It seems to be a conscious choice of SuZA that they do not want to involve the role of the Western European states within the substantial process of discussion. A choice to draw the line on attacking the politics of the Dutch state. The latter would mean the collapse of a broadening alliance with social democratic organizations and committees.

The expansion which the SuZA committee has been looking for doesn't widen anti-parliamentary politics. Its a conscious move to the political right, heading towards social democracy, at the cost of the radical parts of the movement.

Both the AABN (the official anti-apartheid movement) and the SuZA, each in its own way, present the blockade as the right answer, respectively, to the people who cut the petrol hoses and/or the "arsonists". We strongly doubt the political pertinence of this action; so many concessions without any view of what is left over in the end.

The politics of coalitions of the SuZA committee has been looking for doesn't develop itself on a basis of its own strength, but from the idea that "we need the social democrats more than they need us." In this way expansion is rendered useless.

Within the anti-Shell campaign the blockade has too much the character of an end station. Perhaps not on purpose, but it's the consequence of the choices that have been made. Choosing this object we consciously did not want to place ourselves outside the running campaign. But we do not want to leave it with that.

It can never be so, to call on groups: "to connect in one way or another, the blockade, as an action against racism there, with

racism here." This "indirect aim" (according to SuZA) denies the essence of anti-apartheid struggle. Anti-apartheid struggle is to act from the consciousness that the powers that maintain apartheid are the same powers that determine our reality. A reality which exists of growing contradictions: deterioration, isolation, deportations of "unwanted refugees", sexism and racism and the actual writing off of groups of people. It's necessary that the harshness of these contradictions be put back into the political process here, within our struggle, sometimes spectacular, but above all with a long breath, in order to build up structures which, on the basis of substantial solidarity, survive the success (or failure) of an action.

A political mobilization which puts aside, as an "indirect aim", is a "still born."

We are conscious of the fact that the practical development of that force will ask more and more from us in the next few years. both in building up a strong political infrastructure and organizational structure, and for instance, in the field of prison struggle. Not to be isolated, estranged from each other, but to fight for collectivity and to become more and more human within that struggle, that is what connects both inside and outside of prison walls.

And at the same time that is what the state wants to destroy at all costs.

As revolutionary politics gains strength, the state will increase repression, in keeping with the necessity of European unification and harmonization.

In the same way the operation of April 11, 1988 was a shot in the dark, with the intention to scare off and to intimidate.

There are important years ahead: either we take ourselves seriously and develop ourselves--within the complete social spectre--to be a meaningful factor. To become a force which can, with right and reason, be called a counter-force; or we become a marginal "political phenomenon".

We will have to formulate an answer to the advancing development of estrangement, international exploitation and repression. That answer has to be fought for step by step. Together with all whom it concerns and who want it, in discussion and practice with regards to the anti-patriarchal, anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggle. Within that process we will have to profile our own identity as a revolutionary movement. Increasing our own strength is an absolute condition for cooperation and the forming of tactical or strategic alliances, be it temporary or not.

Groups like RARA are sometimes accused of having politics without any perspective because such militant cores are thought to

be inaccessible and therefore isolated. For sure the organization in illegal groups has its restrictions, and it can't be the sole perspective, because that form of struggle alone can never become more massive. However, what it's about is the cohesion between different--fighting--groups, on all levels.

Thereby a militant can and must contribute to the development of the revolutionary political process here.

By setting limits, giving anger a voice, showing that resistance is possible.

When that is the basis, when the militant practice feeds the common discussion and the other way around, then there cannot be isolation.

Then we can come further.

We will do the utmost to achieve this.

Support the revolution in Southern Africa, form the front in Western Europe

Solidarity with the struggle of the hungerstrikers in West Germany

Solidarity with all fighting prisoners

Refugee policy is European Apartheid, stop the deportations

**Revolutionary
 Anti
 Racist
 Action**

RARA COMMUNIQUE

DURING THE NIGHT OF MARCH 18-19, RARA MADE ITSELF HEARD AGAIN. THE PROVINCIAL POLICE BARRACKS IN ARNHEM AND OLDENZAAL WERE THE TARGET OF ARSON ATTACKS. THE CAUSE ACCORDING TO RARA IN AN EXTENSIVE COMMUNIQUE, WHICH WAS NOT FULL OF THE USUAL JARGON AND RHETORIC, IS THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE IN THE SUPERVISION OF FOREIGNERS IN THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY.

ACCORDING TO RARA "ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT WE HAVE CARRIED OUT ACTIONS AGAINST THE DUTCH MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEES, WE WANT TO STRESS THAT THIS IN NO WAY IS TO BE INTERPRETED AS A BREAK WITH OUR PREVIOUS POLITICAL PRACTICE OF THE PAST FEW YEARS" FURTHER, THE COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT "IN SOUTH AFRICA RACISM IS INSTITUTIONALIZED IN APARTHEID. HERE IN HOLLAND, RACISM IS ENTRENCHED IN AND LEGITIMIZED BY THE LAWS WHICH FORM THE BASIS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENTAL REFUGEE POLICIES."

RARA MAKES REFERENCE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO THE SCHENGEN AGREEMENT AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN. WITH RESPECT TO THE LAST: 'OF COURSE IT SOUNDS BEAUTIFUL...GLOBALLY IT SEEMS HOWEVER THAT THE PRINCIPLES AND RESOLUTIONS CONFESSED TO BY PEN AND MOUTH SERVE ONLY AS A MEANS OF PROPAGANDA IN THE COLD WAR. REFUGEES FROM THE EAST HAVE BEEN WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE THEY FORM A LIVING TESTIMONY AGAINST COMMUNISM. IN CONTRAST, REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTH ARE USUALLY IDENTIFIED AS PROFITEERS AND CRIMINALS. THE RESULT IS THAT WHAT IS OVERLOOKED, OR PARTIALLY IGNORED, IS THE FACT THAT THE ORIGIN OF ORGANIZED REFUGEE MOVEMENT IS LARGELY A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE POWER POLITICS OF THE WEST. THE FLOW OF REFUGEES IS OFTEN DELIBERATELY CREATED A RESULT OF PURELY

CAPITALISTIC ACTIONS, BY GROUPS SUCH AS THE IMF, WORLD BANK AND OTHERS."

ABOUT THEIR FINAL OBJECTIVES RARA WRITES " IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THIS IS ABOUT A WORLD WITHOUT OPPRESSION, SEXISM, EXPLOITATION, POISONING, AND RACISM. THIS IS NOT SOME PATHETIC CREDO, RATHER IT IS AT THE CORE OF THE TYPE OF SOCIALISM WHICH WE HOLD DEAR. THE QUESTION HOWEVER IS HOW THE PROGRESS ALONG THIS PATH WILL APPEAR TO PEOPLE. CONTRADICTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE; FEWER AND FEWER PEOPLE WILL HAVE MORE AND MORE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES. YOU WOULD THINK THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO TENSION AND EVEN TO OPPOSITION, BUT IT IS OUR OBSERVATION THAT THIS CONTROL OVER SPIRITS HAS BECOME A NEW PENITENTIARY."

RARA ACTION

Tonight, March 18/19 we attacked with incendiary bombs the district headquarters of the Royal Gendarme (*Koninklijke Marechaussee*, shortened as *KMAR* - the border police of the Netherlands) at Vijverlaan 107 in Arnhem in the province of Gelderland, and at Prins Bernhardlaan 2 in Oldenzaal in the province of Overijssel.

THE INTERNAL ENEMY

"The sluice-gate function of our border does not exist anymore. Unwanted foreigners and, for example, foreign criminals soon will be less conspicuous. At the border we are confronted with them, but in the future we will have to look for them within the country.
(Commander of the *KMAR* Brigade, Zevenaer)

In September 1988, the Dutch Parliament received two letters concerning the *KMAR*, one from the Minister of Defence, and one from the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Justice; due to their responsibility for the border police, stating that 200 of the 325 border police at the Dutch border with Germany will be used for internal control of foreigners. (The others will reinforce the border police at harbors and airports.) This is because checks at the border will be abolished with the unification of Europe in 1992.

In the course of the installation of the (now delayed) Schengen Agreement, which is the basis of this unification, the borders between the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg), France, and Germany, will gradually be abolished. This will cause control problems with regards to "unwanted refugees". The checkpoints at the borders will be transferred to the interior of the country. The previous State secretary of Justice Korte Van Hemel stated that: "The Netherlands has an attractive appeal to illegals." According to her, without border checks, it

an effort to get the loyalty of the population. One of their efforts is to brainwash the the population through a new european nationalism. We are supposed to start to think european; to recognize the advantages of a europe without borders. ^{Hayer} We have to ensure that the open borders are not used by millions of "foreign subjects" who will try to get the advantages of a united Europe. The outside borders of Europe have to be of a thicker concrete than the iron curtain was. The embassies of the countries from which a lot of refugees are expected are now given the function of borderposts and have to discourage possible refugees. Airline companies have to pay for a return ticket for those persons without visas. Schengen (and now the unification process) is conducive to all this.

They use a 'white-Holland-watches-black-Holland' mentality. By organization of the asylum-policy, Schengen offers a few international agreements by which it becomes possible to legally refuse more and more people. It gives the reasons needed to execute an even sharper search-and-prosecute policy, and to, as Prime Minister Lubbers put it "sift the chaff from the wheat". Apparently this is also the reason for the transfer from identity control at the border to identity control in the streets by mobile brigades of the KMAR. They are trying to create a certain mentality. Every non-white has to give undisputable proof that (s)he is not an illegal, a criminal or a terrorist. Who is obliged to identify him/herself? Who can be hunted down by the KMAR? The fact that the KMAR has said that you can recognize illegals by their appearance can only mean that you can discriminate between black and white. Support for this police-expertise comes from, among others, the prominent anti-racist, anti-apartheid fighter pr excellance, the chief of one of the most

page 7

becomes necessary to search for these peoples in the big cities. This is the new job of the KMAR. The KMAR is an elite-police, and comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense.

In the 1970's, ^{the KMAR} they worked together with the foreigner-central-office of the Amsterdam Police, at the request of the Minister of Justice. Their job was to find and deport illegal refugees. This development is continuing.

The KMAR will be used as a 'flying-brigade' in the big cities. The Law on Foreigners makes it possible to stop and check people where there "is a reason to suspect that they are foreigners". What this means in practice is that they look at the color of your skin. The statement of one member of the KMAR is clear on this point: "From experience we recognize illegals by their appearance".

In the fight between the local and the state police (In the Netherlands there ^{are} ~~exist~~ two different police forces), or better yet, between the departments of Internal Affairs and Justice, the department of Justice has won a greater freedom of policy. As soon as the local KMAR search-teams come into existence, the Mayor of a town (who is responsible for police matters) will not have to give reports to the district council; that would take too much time. The few still existing minimal possibilities for democratic control via the City Councils will vanish. The KMAR troops will become shock-troops for the department of Justice. Not bothered by any form of control they will become an autonomous and independent apparatus within the police force. With names received directly from the Ministry of Justice, their hunt for refugees will be even more effective.

It is because of all this that we have decided upon a first action against the elite-police of this prosecution-policy;

against the boots in the street. Although this is the first time we have acted against Dutch refugee politics, we stress that this in no way can be seen as a change in our political practice of the past few years.

There are no reasons to change. Neither the situation in South Africa, nor the positions of the Dutch Government and Dutch companies give us any reason to change. All that has changed is that the White Apartheid regime has had to give more space to the Black resistance. But the demands for sanctions and international isolation of the white regime are still in force. For us, as for others, it remains a priority to seek effective ways to support the resistance in South Africa. We've done that, and we will continue to do so. However, the struggle against apartheid and racism does not stop at the borders of South Africa. Anti-racism has always been at the heart of our actions and statements, and with this action we, at the most, change the accent a little. Our attack on refugee policy is consistent with our earlier declarations. These declarations have had as their point of view the idea that our solidarity with the struggles in the Third World ^{is} ~~are~~ connected to the struggles against the political, economic, and military institutions in the West - the institutions which organize, and profit from, oppression. In South Africa, racism is institutionalized in apartheid. Here, racism is lawfully and legally institutionalized in the refugee policy. It is at this point, where the refugee policies have been developed to a ruthless arrest and deportation practice, that we must act - but in a controlled way. Terrorism against refugees must be stopped, for these policies produce hatred against foreigners and canalize racism. This is a reality which forces us to take sides unequivocally. Racism which is made into a political policy is no

page 3

abstract phenomenon. There are persons, institutions, and organizations directly responsible for creating these policies and for carrying them out. They create images of the refugees as being little more than "parasites" and "criminals". They are the creators, constructors, and button-pushers, of the bureaucratic tread-mills which crush human dignity and corrupt all those who remain by-standers.

The Universal Declaration Of Man:

Par. 14.1 Everyone who is persecuted has the right to search for and to get asylum in other countries.

Par. 13.1 Everyone has the right to move freely and to remain within the borders of state.

This sounds really good. You would agree with it on first hearing it, and that is right. However, worldwide these resolutions are used only as propaganda in the cold war. Refugees from the East are welcomed with open arms. They are living evidence against communism. Refugees from the South are stigmatized as "criminals" and "profiteers". What is covered up is that the refugee movements are created, for the most, as a direct consequence of the power politics in the West. These movements are created as a consequence of the purely capitalistic actions of the IMF, World Bank, etc. People forget that famine, poverty, coups, political repression, and sexual violence are not natural disasters, but a direct consequence of political, social, and economic relations. The Cold War may have stopped, they say, but the war between North and South has been intensified. The refugees from the south start to really become a problem for the west when an increasing number of those millions of refugees start depositing their problems in the middle of our neat and tidy front garden. Only then do political, financial, and humanitarian

problems arise, and then the governments of the Western world are forced to find answers to the demands for asylum. The reaction of the western states is to close the borders and block off Europe. Only then do the contradictions between the same words and the actual deeds become visible: a small percentage gets a 'permitted entry' stamp, as an excuse to declare the biggest majority as "unwanted".

The refugee problem is not unique, but is a reproduction of existing property and power relations. Within these relations every individual refugee is reduced to a product: only those who from which profits can be obtained are permitted entry. For example:

- refugees who can be used as living propaganda; like a short time ago the Russians and East Europeans. Or like the limited number of boatpeople from Vietnam; meanwhile the others are forced to go back.

- refugees who are used for population politics, like the jewish soviet refugees, used as pawns in their demographic war against the Palestinians. Also, Turkey uses refugees from Bulgaria against the Kurdish landclaims, etc.

- Refugees are used to solve a particular problem of the capitalist economy. For instance, West Germany opened her borders to the first highly-educated refugees from East Germany. At the same time, the South African government through a public relations campaign, recruits among former east-germans so as to keep important positions within the South-African economy purely white.

"Not wanted". That is told to over 90%; the millions of people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A majority are women and children who are starving and destitute because of war, and who don't get much further than refugee-camps in a neighbouring

country (which is often as poor as their own country).

Unwanted are almost all the women who flee because of rape, maltreatment and harassment - specific terrors against women are not recognized as a reason to flee. Not even when this terror takes place in a police station, during raids, or in torture-centres. Unwanted are nearly all the women and children who don't contribute to the capitalist standards of productivity in the western societies, however they are wanted in the Third World in order to function as a reserve army of labour for the multinationals.

Unwanted are the women and male freedom-fighters from countries with violent and fascist governments; governments which have nevertheless good relations with the western states. ^{PK} Reasons for, and consequences of, the refugee movements are being covered up by the policy makers. They do not look at the motive behind the refugee's flight.

The true standard or criteria by which people are given an "unwanted" or "wanted" stamp remains concealed. The standard they use to judge refugees is one based on how useful or threatening a group of refugees is to the political and social stability, rather than on the special history of the refugees. Furthermore, there is the practice of the intelligence-services, like the BVD, which offers residence permits in exchange for information about particular political organisations, or for infiltration of these organisations.

SCHENGEN: NOT EVEN SIGNED, BUT USED

Schengen; the test for a united Europe and the prototype for a society which is streamlined according to the needs of the European Capitalists. The Schengen group working in a mysterious manner, uncontrolled even by the European parliaments, is making

page 6

Start
here → racist police forces in the Netherlands. "The KMAR is an elite force, ready to operate at the forefront of priority affairs, and will be used to supplement the surveillance of foreigners. The operating field of the KMAR will not be widened to include raids on refugees", according to Van Thijn, mayor of Amsterdam in a speech on the 175th anniversary of the KMAR. He sees in the mentality of the KMAR and the "tripartite [three parties] (mayor, local justice department, and local police chief) a guaranty and insurance against racist politics and repression...

So far we have made clear the scope of our solidarity with refugees. It is important to make this solidarity visible and clear. Many things have happened already: by lawyers, through actions, demonstrations, publications, organisation, etc. People are trying hard to find places where refugees can stay, to collect money for them, to find jobs for them under-the-counter, and to find them alternative health-care services. These are all facts, but we must also see that the racist policies of the state have gained broad support. The brain-washing has worked to a certain degree. There has been created a kind of "popular instinct" which states that the population is being cheated by alien elements who claim to be refugees but who in fact are thieves of our welfare and prosperity. A climate is growing in which it is considered justified to treat asylum-seekers as a criminal group. This would also be in the interest of the bona-fide refugee (who is that ???), so they tell us.

Quite shocking is the degree to which they have succeeded in using linguistic terms which disguise the manner in which they treat people, and which leads people to believe that the state acts in a very restrained and gentle manner. Prisons are called

lodgings, internment camps are called refugee-camps, racism is called discouragement policy, raids are called home-visits, and economic and social repression is called bed-bath-and-bread provision. By the time the real meaning of these words and procedures becomes clear, the policy had already moved ahead three steps.

"We sit here and look at each other. Its like a prison. Where can you go with only 20 guilders a week in your pocket?" - Kurdish refugee in an internment camp.

It is going to be done silently. People are put away in camps in the country-side. This policy is formulated in secret meetings somewhere in europe. The concrete measures of this policy are formulated in The Hague [Dutch seat of government]. During all this time, planes leave the country. Deported people can't protest. Many of them get imprisonment or worse, like in Morroco or Turkey...those who will have their turn tomorrow are waiting in prisons and police-cells today.

We think that the struggle against state racism has to be, more than ever, integrated into the political practice of the left. The struggle for the rights of refugees has to be raised from a judicial to a political level. Not only because racism has to be fought on moral and political grounds, but because racism and sexism are political instruments of the ruling class. The social wealth of west has to be shared, especially with those who are forced to flee and find themselves in an environment such as the west which is hostile towards refugees and migrants. The refugee in general is not an "object" of our solidarity. So paternal an attitude is left to those politicians and others persons who earn their daily bread and butter from the misery of others. On the contrary, every refugee has a story and every story contains the most important elements of the recent history of the

majority of the worlds population. We don't want to be led by wishful thinking. This was no more than a modest contribution. But out of our history, position and practice, we try to develop a militant practice with the themes mentioned.

It is not a religious confession when we say that we want a world without repression, exploitation, poisoning, without racism and sexism, ^{indeed} this is at the core of socialism as we imagine it. The question however is how the progress along ^{this} ~~the~~ path will appear to people. Contradictions will continue to increase, fewer and fewer people will have more and more of the opportunities. You would think this would lead to a tension and even to opposition, but it is our observation that control over the mind has become a new prison.

While the difference between the rich and poor, between the persecuted and the un-persecuted does not fade away, but rather is rising rapidly, the collective left has never been in such bad shape. Social structures have disintegrated, organisations have split up, ideals seem contaminated and goals and aims are diffused. Without getting on a high-horse, we as a left-wing and revolutionary movement must once more try to build up something with each other. Militant resistance can be a part of this, it can point out the sore spots. The first step is recognition, the sign of relief that something is happening. The following steps are more difficult. We are all products of this society. Individualist, everyone for her/himself with ideals and anger, but the attempts to convert this into a collective perspective keeps sinking down in the daily struggle for a personal perspective, something which is not always the same.

Nevertheless, we want to try and do it, not because we know better, for we know very well that militant actions on their own

page 10

won't get results. A spectacular action, once, twice, or three times doesn't change anything. We regard it as a contribution for more actions, ideas, discussions.

The extradition machine does not keep moving by itself. Its kept moving by man hunters and typewriter killers. And thats the way we want to treat them in public. The apparatus itself no longer remains out of harms way. As we said before: the struggle of the refugees has to be raised from a judicial to a political level. That means that the refugee policy has to be taken out of the hands of the police, KMAR, and the justice department. It means that forced settlement into camps has to end, that the special prisons and have to be closed. Asylum seekers (m/f) have to have free entrance into our society. This means that they must have access to all necessary financial, judicial, social, educational, and medical resources. These are the minimum conditions. Furthermore the defintion of the term 'refugee' has to be changed. It has to be politicised. Specific reasons for fleeing such as rape, war, forced removal, and the destruction of economies must all be recognised. The term 'economic refugee' has to be crossed out. ... Poverty has to be a recognized reason to flee. The solution to this can't be found in sending people back, but in a fundamental change in the international system.

Until then we will sabotage and attack the deportation policy.

With kind regards, RARA.

RARA Attacks Man-Hunters

While the CDA (christian democratic party -trans.) was announcing plans to charter airplanes to deport asylum-seekers from The Netherlands, with the aid of chemical nerve-calming sprays if necessary, the group Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action (RARA) made its presence felt once again. The following is their communique:

Communique

On the night of June 30/July 1, after numerous timely warnings, we detonated explosive devices on the third floor of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The target of this action was the office of the DIA (Labor Relations Inspection Service -trans.) which is located on this floor. The DIA plays a key role in the hunt for illegal immigrants. On average twice a day, this service, along with local law enforcement agencies, organizes raids of businesses that are suspecting of employing illegal immigrants. In the coming years, this service is to be doubled. This means more raids, more victims, more fear. With our action, we sought to draw the line and to let the man-hunters feel for themselves what it's like to be hunted. To let them know what it's like to be a target, to be stigmatized. Initially, we released a shorter press statement. In this communique, we'd like to take the time to go into matters more deeply.

"Sobering, But Humane"

The illegals-debate has suddenly arisen once more. An optimist might say that this is because of the fierce reactions to the humiliating attempt by Rottenberg and Kosto to draw in the Bolkenstein right-wing last spring. The reactions were indeed fierce, almost encouraging one might say. Public comments from the PvdA (social democratic party -trans.) leadership, namely their apologies that everything slipped out so unfortunately, gives the appearance that they have retreated back to their corner. But sadly, things don't work that way. Policies stand hard and fast, and they are designed by a select club of bureaucrats and the ministers that frequent European conferences. Policy, one that backs out of the rules of the managed democracy.

Torch-light processions, rallies, and demonstrations against racism give some hope that people won't just sit back and accept what's going on. But the politicians have charted their own course, and although they notice that the number of demonstrators is high, they realize that these people won't overstep the boundaries which dictate appropriate conduct in The Netherlands. So the politicians can keep doing what they are doing and remain relatively undisturbed. The hate-campaign against illegals has been going on for some time, and now it has been given form in policy. A policy that dictates that illegals may be subjected to the most draconian and inhumane authority measures. Sobering, but humane; Kosto allowed commissions like the Zeevalking Commission to design a policy of starvation. The purpose is to make life for illegals impossible here. Illegals are a problem, that's the

message, in differing but nonetheless harsh tones, which politicians from the right to so-called 'left' are sending out. A wave of accusations and insults are hurled at a group of people that are easy to attack. And not only at them. Everything that reeks of being foreign is suspected of being here for no good reason. It's easy to mobilize people on the fear that their wallets will be stolen. Mayor Peper said that police had discovered 1100 Turks all registered at the same address: "Busloads full of people come here, collect their welfare, and then go back to Turkey." Perhaps he didn't want to be outdone by his colleagues in Amsterdam, who said they needed to expand the police force due to the 15000 illegal immigrants from Ghana that were dealing drugs in the city. It doesn't matter that there are no facts whatsoever to back up these claims. The media spreads these claims, and the message does its work. News is news. A small note on page 17 in the newspaper a few weeks later, noting the errors of the previous story, has little effect. The tone has already been established. Anyone who thought that illegals would be left alone for a while has been deceived. If anything, this is the calm before the storm. Nawijn and Kosto recently added another shovel-full to the mountain of filth they have already spewed forth about illegals. This time it was the story that illegals must be deported before 'genuine' refugees can be allowed in to be housed. Yet another proclamation from those that have the power to make and administer policy. The course has been charted, and the hunt continues. Anyone trying to get a glimpse behind the scenes of the fatherland's political stage is left to ponder a question, like a wasp on a jar of honey: Where are all these idiotic statements coming from, that are so degrading and insulting to so many people?

From 'Guest-Worker' To 'Economic Refugee'

Illegality is actually a political definition, nothing more, nothing less. In the 60s and 70s, businesses used to recruit workers who were wandering out of the countries by the Mediterranean Sea. Tens of thousands of these 'spontaneous immigrants', as they were then called, were allowed to find work. And a good thing, too, because the work they got was often hard and dirty labor, and there was a shortage of man-power. Between the mines of Limburg, the oil tankers in Rotterdam's harbor, and toilets all over, there was one thing in common: cheap labor did the work, provided these people were 'guest-workers'. This seemed like a strange way to treat 'guests', as they were described in the flexible political jargon, so something had to be done about the actual situation. This was actually quite simple: these people were only brought here for reasons of economic gain. The importing of 'guest-workers' was necessary to allow for the economic growth at that time. Those industries that had rapidly developed were hampered by a shortage of labor, thus a portion of the nation's productive capacity was not being utilized. This process had nothing to do with 'tolerance' or 'hospitality'. So it's even less of a surprise that this situation didn't last long. Ever since the 70s, a time of economic decline and

increasing unemployment, this recruitment process has stopped. This policy was given the following credo: "Holland is not an immigration land." With the stroke of a political-judicial pen, 'spontaneous' immigration became 'illegal' immigration, and the state created its 'illegals problem'. This didn't matter that much to the migrants themselves. Their arrival wasn't dictated by the changing judicial categories of this country, but rather by the increasing gap between the rich North and the poor South. Illegals are, above all else, human beings. In search of a future, a little bit of happiness. People who have left house and home behind, in Turkey, Morocco, Ghana, people who have decided to flee from hopelessness in the hope of building a better existence here in the wealthy West. They don't succeed, they aren't wanted, and they are stigmatized as 'economic refugees'. Their motives for coming to the wealthy West are not accepted. Hopelessness is not a motive, not a reason to flee. What matters is their economic usefulness, not their economic and social emergency. But for illegals, there is no way back, they prefer the insecurity of an illegal life to the security of a hopeless one. And people profit greatly from this. The racist double-standard in the labor market and in the society, which was created in the 60s, still exists today. In short, this is because 'guest-work' (read: poorly paid, boring, and difficult work) is not a temporary but rather a structural condition. It's a myth to think that economic growth makes labor more agreeable, let alone to think that everyone shares in the well-being. The 'guest-workers' are living proof of this, in spite of the fact that they are literally hidden away in invisible, cage-like, fire-hazard hostels and special neighborhoods. Most migrants are already forced to the bottom of society, and for illegals this is doubly true. And they are shamelessly exploited. Thanks to their illegal labor, certain sectors of the Dutch economy continue to function. Illegal workers are cheap, because they are illegal. Everyone knows damn well that deporting these illegals would force hundreds of businesses in the food, catering, green-house, and cleaning industries to go bankrupt. Oppression, exploitation, and humiliation form the basis of the silent compact between the state, politicians, and industry regarding illegality. And these peoples, the numbers vary, but it's certainly not more than a sold-out stadium for an Ajax-Feyenoord soccer game, are supposedly the embodiment of the threatened destruction of our country.

"To Keep The Problems Here In Control..."

The problem of illegals is only a problem in the (...) and in the realms of policy where things are threatening to get out of hand. And at a moment when things need to be speedily prepared for the coming European unity. At that point, some explanation needs to be sought for the non-stop horror film that is being played out at the Binnenhof (Dutch parliament -trans.), an explanation of the crazy ideas and the xenophobia that seems to be controlling politics in this country.

The political side of the economic and social restructuring

of Europe is not going as well as they would like. The euphoria of the Europe of the Citizen is starting to wane, now that the contours of the Europe of Capital are beginning to take shape. At first, a United Europe seemed like an amazing, over-ripe apple tree which just needed to be lightly shaken to provide enough capitalist fruit for everyone. Now there is more and more fear and dissatisfaction with the political and social changes taking place. A struggle in primarily ideological terms is forming and reaching out into increasingly broad sectors of the population. These are all signs of a crisis of legitimacy wherein politics and the economic system are at fault. Racism is utilized to create a new sense of social consensus, over the backs of the 'others', the 'illegals', the 'foreigners'. Taking a crowbar in hand against the social contradictions. Kosto put it literally: "...remove them to keep the problems here in control...". Racism finds fertile ground in a land where, for as long as people can remember, the Western man has been the measure of all things; a country whose own colonial history has never been questioned.

A Slice Of Bread And Satisfaction

Because the problems which the politicians are dealing with seem so massive, they have broadened their horizons. Not only migrants, but also other sectors of the population can now rejoice in the great importance which the politicians see in their existence.

What is immediately obvious is the connection which is being made between the so-called illegals problem and another huge social problem: unemployment. The problem isn't that there is a shortage of jobs, like the politicians want us to believe, or that their labor policies have been wrong for years. Unemployment seems to be a national disaster which the unemployed themselves have created. And more and more fraudulent reports are fed to the media, that x% of the population is cheating the system, 40% are cheating, 75% are cheating...Now we just have to wait for a report that says that in this or that neighborhood, 132% of all welfare recipients cheat the system and like it that way. And politicians like Robin Linschoten come to the original conclusion that welfare payments need to be reduced to people in those neighborhoods and that the unemployed need guardians placed over them. First it was the WAO (a form of welfare - trans.) recipients that had to be taken to task. During the industrial restructuring one decade ago, entire sectors of the working class got stuck in the WAO reservoir. Ten years later, they are presented as profiteers and fakers so as to stop the expansion of the social services budget. This new work-ethic that is preached, often in connection with 'illegals', and linked to complaints of how our degraded and derailed society, in which welfare fraud seems to be a national sport, is simply a means to approve plans to cut costs. The notion of social security has become a short-lived myth that needs to be cut back. The conditions under which the welfare compromise, the welfare state, and social security were created were directly linked to capitalist expansion. That means, according to the margin of profit. The

economic restructuring which is taking place at the moment, and whose goal is to secure profits and conditions to bring about new expansion, is coupled with a firm grip on production and labor relations and intensified competition. Massive lay-offs and big problems at major corporations like Hoogovens, Fokker, DAF, Phillips, and KLM are the result. Unemployment rises sharply every month. The model of social security, formulated in a period of unlimited prosperity and growth, and which was supposed to serve as a safety net to catch those that nonetheless fell out of the boat, now seems out of place. Austerity measures, cutting benefit payments, and making the model less attainable for people by putting increasing pressure on the unemployed, the introduction of the notion of 'temporary work', forced re-schooling, and other such things are the order of the day. This has nothing to do with a policy that aims at full-employment, something which is impossible under capitalist relations. This also makes the call for 'more jobs' pointless. What kind of jobs? More polluting production? More useless products and services? Instead of fundamental discussions about a human interpretation of the notions of labor and production, a discussion of the social value of labor, a discussion of the fundamentals of an economic and social model, the needle remains lost in the haystack of the interests of the ruling powers. A climate is created in which work, at any price, is deemed acceptable, and thus the model of social security becomes minimal and even less accessible. The new work-ethic gives free-reign to draconian measures under this model. The welfare state has been making the underclasses artificially satisfied for decades now. That time is now gone. In the welfare state of the future, you can choose to rent your own cell, or a waterproof cardboard box. Or you end up in a re-education camp, chewing on a piece of bread with satisfaction, guarded by soldiers trying to imitate Elco Brinkman. There's nothing the politicians won't say to create a climate in which they can push through their measures.

The most direct and cynical manner of exploitation is that of shame. As if it wasn't bad enough to introduce yourself as an unemployed person at someone's birthday party, now you are made to feel like total shit, a part of the legion of people responsible for all of society's problems. Exclusion, compulsion, and the limiting of rights, these will all become normal means of making this "God forsaken country", to use Lubbers' (Dutch prime minister -trans.) words, healthy again. The society is shaken up with a heavy hand, and a new jacket is fitted to its underside. New social divisions are created. Minimum-wage earners, migrants, so-called inactive people, these are the different sectors of society that are forever excluded from any sort of future, a future where no one has to stand on the sidelines, just as long as you work. "There is no bigger modern illusion, or deception, than the use of that one word 'work', something which is utterly degrading, painful, and socially inferior for some, and wonderful, status-enhancing, and economically rewarding for others." (J.K.Galbraith) This exactly describes the logic of capitalism. A system that generates world-wide wealth, precisely because it also produces poverty and sorrow, and that to an

increasing degree.

A Reactionary Neurosis

The great leap forward to a United Europe, which we are witnessing, is being lead by spirited language and crass proclamations. All the big mouths in the Binnenhof are trying to out-do one another in the category of messing up and making idiotic statements. In the search for an ideological glue to legitimize their policy approach, and no one is waiting for this except for the political and economic elite itself. Within the developed relationship between, on the one hand, the realization of European goals, and, on the other hand, the construction of concrete changes, lies the explanation of a number of specific mechanisms which set the political climate these days. To draw attention away from the underlying political and economic goals of this policy, the political elite tries to always focus attention on the internal necessity of taking these measures. "Fraud is ruining our society," said an angry Wim Kok (leader of the social democrats - trans.), who usually only gets emotional if someone questions his bookkeeping abilities. This is said to legitimize budget cuts with the goal of bringing the Dutch state in line with surrounding states. You see the same thing in the struggle against the moral decay which Holland seems to be suffering from, something which is called social renewal by the policy makers. This social renewal is the quasi-positive term which is really just a cover to create an ideological climate which will allow for more control. Politicians would like to present social renewal as the struggle against dog droppings in the playground around the corner, but under this same motto, new crime packages are enacted which increase the power of the state at the expense of the accused. Every escape and every act of petty theft is used to justify prison camps, bodily punishments, more cops, and iron-fisted politics. And you see the exact same mechanism in the paranoia around asylum-seekers and migrants. They are defined in terms of being an internal enemy, the fifth column, the death of Dutch culture. And all this to justify the decisions being taken at the European level to close all doors to migrants. The golden rule of advertising has taken hold of politics as well: Repeat something often enough, and you can push even the most nasty of products down someone's throat. Kosto's policy is the Iglo TV-dinner of Dutch politics.

The reactionaries are in control in the Europe of the 90s. In the gap between distress and ideology, an attempt is being made to push back all of the gains made by the left since the 60s. Through the unambiguous words of the growing extreme-right organizations, through the major parties' minority-debate couched in neutral terms, in the renewal of norms and values, and in the harmonization of laws and duties. After years of a combination of social and economic impoverishment and the pointing-out of scape-goats, neo-liberal politics has dressed its monsters in brown shirts. The major parties then attack these extremists, thus giving themselves a respectable image, while taking another step to the right at the same time. Together they are creating

political disorder, they are opening wounds and pertly declaring that they are discarding taboos. It is this drift to the right that is deciding political relations. The fuss over illegals is nothing else but a licence for racist language. The fuss over welfare fraud is nothing else but a licence for control and repression and the linking of all existing databanks. The fuss over rights and duties is nothing else than a licence for eroding the social system and sticking people with flexible, insecure, and poorly-paid jobs. A reactionary neurosis has taken hold of politics. The nuances can only be detected by those with perfect hearing.

The World Of Peter Stuyvesant

A village-mentality is dominant in The Netherlands. Discussions about the causes and consequences of substantive developments hardly ever take place, let alone about the international relations which are involved. A kind of universalist lie is created, which functions as the basis of the defence of the West's privileged position. The economic war being waged against the countries of the southern hemisphere knows no changes from the transition from the Old to the New World Order. If anything, these changes have made it easier for Western countries and corporations to manoeuvre. Capital is moving across the world at an even faster pace, with anonymous institutions like the World Bank and IMF having ever more influence. It hides from all discussions, from all controls, from all choice. Countries and peoples are temporarily taken up into the 'course of humanity', used, and then tossed away like a pair of old socks. The international division of labor has ruined the Third World. The capitalization of agriculture has driven millions of people from the countryside to the slums of the big cities. Excessive cultivation of nature and the forced introduction of mono-cultures has led to an ecological disaster which is impossible to overlook. The hunger in Ethiopia, Somalia, and the lands of the Sahel is a direct result of this. It is cynically stated that the only thing some countries are capable of producing is refugees. And the West has no need for this export product. The Third World's debt now totals 1350 billion dollars. In contrast to 55 billion in annual development money, they are saddled with 154 billion in annual interest payments on previous debts. There are 80 million people world-wide who are fleeing from hunger, sorrow, poverty, hopelessness, persecution, and (sexual) violence. These are cold, abstract numbers which hide the terrible levels of human suffering which exist. As long as that suffering stays in its place, everything's OK. As long as it stays circulating within the Third World, everything's fine. But if that suffering comes too close to Europe, all hell breaks loose. Instead of a discussion of causes and consequences, about the West's responsibility for the desolate conditions in the South, then you get a minority-debate on how to keep these profiteers outside our door. And increasingly, people state openly that it's their own fault anyway. After all, we send them development money and blue helmets, and what do they do? Nothing!

Consciousness about the connection between the (neo-) colonial history of the West and the present refugee migration movement is crushed between the truth of right-left discussions. When the terms migration, integration, and refugees are presented, then people seem to suffer from an acute case of historical amnesia. Ideologies based on racism and white supremacy still form a fundamental part of Western culture. A Eurocentric view of the world permeates the thought of both the right and the left. The end of ideologies, of history, post-modernism, post-materialism, post-whateverism, these are all just philosophies, mind-games that are only relevant to a very limited part of the world. From a situation of overflow, people presume that Stuyvesant is a good example of how people from other countries should act. The few refugees that ever make it to the West are looked upon with suspicion. If they are even admitted, then they are expected to be polite and listen to Bolkenstein. He goes through the entire liberal corpus, searching for elements of strange cultures. Racism is evident in all aspects of the administration's refugee policy, if one can even call it that. Or maybe this politicizes the question too much. Interests and contradictions are then put on the table, while everyone does their best to make the policies seem kind of funny and boring or whatever, but certainly not evil.

No man's land

The political and leadership crisis of the system, as we analyze it, does not mean that there are many possibilities for the militant-left to intervene. Of course there are lots of little dents and tears that undermine social consensus. But at the moment, there are not enough signs of a growing cultural and political resistance which is in a position to question the legitimacy of the Ayatollahs of liberal democracy. The political caste operates in a given manner in a no man's land. Just as the dynamics of European unity have started, it's more correct to speak of a management crisis than a happy ending, now that the weight of the Cold War can be thrown overboard. And everyone now finally agrees that the society we live in is the best there can be. They are lost in the wilderness, afraid that they can't fulfil their necessary historical task of completing Project Europe. Or the fact that maybe it won't turn out to be the Europe of their dreams, that doesn't matter so much. What matters is to push through those measures that are necessary for the next phase of competition, plundering, pollution, and destruction. Those sectors of society that are no longer needed in this right-wing paradise need to be kept in check, and, most of all, they must not affect expansion. Those people that already had politics and the society already turn their backs to them are now fed with cheap images of the enemy; everything's fine, just as long as discontent is not directed at the political caste itself. The left is operating in this same no man's land, but it is hardly able to utter anything significant. Many people have the will, but due the pressure of the right-wing roll-back, no one seems to have the time nor the nerve to precisely analyze what's going on.

In these times, when even a consistent humanist is considered a political radical, is it necessary that a radical, permanent, and uncompromising resistance exist. We want to break into that political field of power, with means that no one can negate. This is not merely an expression of radical opposition. Nor is it an unnecessary luxury in a time when the body-snatchers go into action right after a Boeing jet crashed into Bijlmer (a high-rise apartment neighborhood in Amsterdam where lots of migrants live - trans.), so as to deal with those illegals once and for all. It is also necessary to react to all the lies in this country. Sure, the parliament can adopt an anti-racism law that states: "We maintain that respect for all people is a fundamental part of a democratic society, and everyone living in The Netherlands may share fully in our society; we shall do all we can to combat discrimination and to be a good example ourselves." And then they go on and continue making their policies which contradict these nice words. The same politicians that define racist policies then march at the head of demonstrations against the hatred of foreigners. And dropping people off across the border is called 'courageous'. It is of strategic importance that we place our fingers on the pulse of the fundamental contradictions of the post-Cold War era in the so-called liberal democracies. Breaking into political conditions usually doesn't win any applause or bouquets of flowers. The shock waves that went through The Netherlands in November 1991 were significant. At the risk of journalistic wrath, everyone immediately set out to distance themselves (from RARA's attack - trans.). And who was not guilty of this? Committees and organizations gave their Pavlovian reaction and individuals distanced themselves, as though Kosto himself had been attacked. What people feared was being excommunicated from the (already marginal) political sphere from which they could exercise political influence. And there was also a great fear that there was no way in which people could give a substantive reaction. Even on the left, everyone was sure what they didn't want: no more bombs, not on people, not in that way, and especially not at this time. Only later, when the asylum policies were sharpened even more and structural violence increased, did the positions change somewhat. It also became more clear the trusted democracy had had its time. How can political influence be exercised, if the boundaries and rules of the national policy game are dictated at the European level? It's no surprise that the cabinet is on a collision course: the course has been set and it will be put through at any cost. Lubbers' call to the employers' associations to hold the line and to allow for strikes, so that WAO cuts could be pushed through, is indicative of how hard-line Holland has become. Street protests are dealt with by letting riot cops have their fun. The question remains whether those youths and students that demonstrated in The Hague on May 8, many of them for the first time, will have had 'politics driven home to them', or whether they are now too intimidated to fight for their rights. It wouldn't be the first time that a movement has been wrecked by the arrogance of power, symbolized by the barking and biting blue line. Our militancy arises from such experiences. For us, it is

an option, in conjunction with other methods of struggle, to force a necessary broadening of political possibilities to open up and break through the relations here which have rusted shut. To fight for the necessary space in which a political and cultural counter-movement can further develop itself and grow out into a counter-power.

Breaking into relations is not a question of immediate successes. It's not a matter of forcing Kosto to resign, after the November action, and to atone for his actions by sheltering an illegal immigrant in his cellar. We wouldn't want to subject any illegal immigrant to that. A new wave of radical resistance, like that of the early-80s, is not realistic. You can't just call out and create a resistance, nor can you immediately mobilize people. You can't just cry out that you want a 'counter-movement', no matter how much you want one. Resistance also doesn't come into being 'of its own accord' when the system takes its next step in its long history of humiliation and destruction. What we want to do is make the political self-truths and the borders of political discussion and action, as they are being defined, perfectly clear, in a way that no one can ignore. Nowhere are responsibility and guilt so clear in the debate as they are with respect to Kosto and Bolkenstein. We want to put this element of responsibility back on the political agenda. We want to draw the line and to put a price on policies that are inhumane and degrading. A policy with a name and a seat in parliament, one that can be attacked.

Their Struggle, Our Struggle...

Our politics are certainly internationalist in their orientation. Any form of left-wing politics that is not internationalist has little perspective. Except for the fact that the conditions under which people around the world live are always changing, internationalism is a historical truth. The liberation struggles in Latin America, Vietnam, and South Africa were an inspiration to many people, and they led to a consciousness about the West's organized exploitation and oppression of the countries of the southern hemisphere. But still, the left can no longer rely on the perspectives of struggle that were relevant in the 70s and 80s. The liberation movements and struggles have changed their character. The revolutionary storm of the late-70s and early-80s, under the influence of the Sandinista revolution, which swept through Latin America, faded away with the election defeat of the Sandinistas. The way in which the revolutionary process in Nicaragua was sabotaged, through hunger and war, has led to the idea that imperialism has triumphed and to the long-term question of how to develop new struggles and strategies. Some are trying, after decades of hard and bloody conflict, to consolidate their position at the negotiating table and to effect change from that position. Guerrilla movements have reformed themselves into legal organizations and some have chosen the parliamentary path. And then there are the struggles in the slums, the struggles of base movements, the struggles to change day-to-day life. Some of the

popular organizations that came into being in the relative political spaces created by 'democratization' have grown into powerful movements. All of these developments have confused the European left. Just as fast as the hope for quick revolutionary change has faded, so, too, dies the very interest in it. Solidarity movements are falling apart or disbanding themselves because there's no more work to be done. Mandela is free, the ANC and De Klerk are 'on speaking terms', and elections are coming soon...And that has always been the weakness in the way in which the left has taken on internationalist or anti-imperialist struggle.

The left has made itself too dependent on attractive struggles being waged elsewhere and has not shown the effects which imperialism has back here. Despite the consciousness of linking the struggle there to here, the struggle was generally too relative to the conditions there. The collapse of solidarity movements, for example, those concerned with South Africa, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, says a lot. But support is just as needed now as it ever was. It remains true today that the best form of solidarity to fight for changes here. The European left is now more dependent on itself, in a certain sense, and needs to now find its roots in its own society. More attention needs to be paid to our own experiences, history, culture, and tradition. Fighting for fundamental changes in Western societies is not only of importance to the self-determination of countries in the 'Third World'; it's also about living conditions, freedom, and self-determination here. In other words: their struggle, our struggle, international solidarity.

What this is about is a consciousness of connections. Cause and effect need to be placed in the correct order once again. Europe was born from slavery, genocide, and colonialism. Our welfare system is the result of centuries of oppression and exploitation. Our so-called 'multi-cultural' society is a product of a colonialist past and a neo-colonial present. Increasing racist aggression, violence against migrants and asylum-seekers, smear-campaigns against illegals, and the closing of borders to refugees are all examples of this. And just as they are written off so that the few may profit while the many are degraded, great groups of other people are becoming victims to the golden calf of capitalist progress. There is much to be won in the struggle for fundamental change!

Room For Change

We went to the floor where DIA as its offices. This agency plays a key role in the hunt for illegals. The raid on Blokker (a Dutch department store -trans.) gave just a hint of their potential: they utilized dogs, helicopters, and 120 cops to comb through a distribution center looking for people with suspicious skin color. If a person's nationality was dubious, they were made to say the word "kwartje". If their pronunciation was not Dutch enough in the finely-tuned ears of the bureaucrats, they were taken away. A stamp on the hand and they are transported to city hall, where a smiling CDA politician remarks that compulsory ID

cards could have prevented all of this. But these cops aren't above carrying out smaller actions as well. Day in and day out, they ride around in their little vans, carrying out raids. The agency was created in 1987 on the assumption that unemployment can never be solved so long as there are still illegal immigrants in the country. Recently, their efforts were rewarded with a doubling of their budget and man-power. That means, more raids, more victims, more degradation, more fear. Their location in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Relations illustrates the link between the erosion of social security, the hunt for illegals, and refugee policies.

We don't want to look on meekly while human lives are ruined. While racism stealthfully becomes part of normality. We let the DIA man-hunters have a taste of what it's like to be hunted. Now they know what it's like to be a target, to be stigmatized. We are struggling against a policy and a political culture where victims fall but where the victimizers are never named. The struggle against asylum- and refugee-policies is a struggle for a humanitarian society. A society that offers everyone a future! Where no one has to fear hearing a knock on the door in the middle of the night, from an agency that ruins lives with cold calculation. To reach this goal, we need to create a space for change, by means of actions, building structures, and exchanging and examining ideas. We wanted our action to be a part of this process.

Until the next time,

Revolutionary
Anti-
Racist
Action

July 1993

RAPA Colloquies

Tonight, November 12/13, there were mysterious explosions at two locations, and the cause of these explosions is being looked into by the Ministry of Justice and State Secretary Kosto in particular. An investigation will reveal that after repeated warnings to the police, fire department, and to the targets themselves (the Ministry of Justice in The Hague, and State Secretary Kosto in Grootchermer), a series of explosives were detonated. That these were only intended to cause material damage is clear from the times and locations chosen. With these actions, we want to put an end to the asylum policy which writes off, excludes, and dehumanizes people. A policy with a signature but without a face, a policy made by loyal civil servants and political functionaries. Visible and open to attack.

A CHRONOLOGY

MARCH '91

According to a new policy, the Dutch people are to be required to prove themselves. But this shouldn't be too much of a hassle, because this won't concern white Netherlanders, rather there are to be more vigilant patrols for illegal immigrants. So the Dutch can breathe easier now. The new policy won't infringe on their privacy. The new policy is just one in a series which singles out a particular segment of the population - those damned illegals - to be followed and eventually captured.

Some Netherlanders may recall the surprise of the post-war historians when they discovered with what ease the Nazi's were able to track down Dutch Jews. The very same bureaucratic apparatus and bureaucratic mentality in the minds of our politicians which made it possible then for the Jewish proletariat and the Jewish intelligentsia to be handed over to the *Endlosung* is in effect again today. Of course it's not concerned with setting up a thousand-year *Reich*, free of undesirables. Quite the contrary, the present-day barbarism of Northern/Western Europe clothes itself in the modernist garb of progress, comfort, and welfare. There are no hysterical shouts of the need to "cleanse the populace". Instead, very reasonable problems are put forward for consideration. Isn't Holland too small to receive all of these refugees? Isn't our white welfare-state under a lot of pressure? The man on the street has to be convinced, so the wheat and the chaff must be sorted out among the refugees. The present-day political establishment is second to none in rigidity and bluntness. The only question is, what makes them so zealous?

Who or what are they serving anyway?

MAY '91

State Secretary Kosto and his associates make a recommendation to the Council of State concerning the Schengen Agreement. The Parliament should give in and accept the definitive - yet to be signed - version. With this, every shred of democratic legitimacy surrounding this monstrous decree disappears. The criticisms of several social organizations concerning the Agreement's stipulations on refugee rights and asylum policies are hereby neutralized.

The cabinet accepts the recommendations of the Mulder Commission. It is becoming clear that the cabinet is following its own line with regards to advice on such weighty matters. Whenever social

organizations try to put their feet in the door, the entire cabinet, and especially Kok and Kosto, slam it in their faces.

JUNE '91

Under the judicious leadership of the socialists, France decides to immediately load illegals onto planes and kick them out.

The Amsterdam chief police commissioner, Nordholt, finds the climate right enough for him to put in his own words of wisdom. Amsterdam should be wary of race riots such as have recently shaken Brussels and Antwerp. Something needs to be done "with those illegals", he says. And wasn't it predicted some years ago that Amsterdam could explode into another Brixton, since the area has a reputation of being one where it's usually a foreigner that gets hit by a police bullet?

Holland's zealous adherent to the faith of the red rose and the raised fist (symbols of the Dutch Labor Party - ed.), Kok (the leader of the social democrats - ed.), decries the parasitism of illegal immigrants.

JULY '91

Switzerland celebrates its 500th birthday with, among other things, a fire-bomb attack on a refugee center. Such attacks are common here. It seems there's more to these people than just a diligent striving after money in the name of neutrality.

A member of the United German government mentions, not entirely by accident, that the German people want the army to be used to stop the flood of immigrants into the country. "The people are calling for order troops."

We haven't heard such language used by German government circles in quite some time...

AUGUST '91

The United German government wants to change the clause in its constitution which guarantees universal asylum rights to refugees on German soil. The fact is, this clause, which was made by the Allies to keep alive a memory of the past, is being swept under the carpet. At the same time, the European establishment is gearing up for the implementation of the Schengen Agreement.

In Italy, the army has in fact been put into use against immigrants. Albanian refugees are herded like beasts into a soccer stadium and held as prisoners. When they try to resist this inhumane treatment, a battle ensues with the army. Because this is embarrassing for such a 'polite country' like Italy, the refugees are given a gratuity, put on a plane, and flown home.

The results of a poll are published: one half of the Dutch population thinks that foreigners should be sent back to their land of origin. The government's policy is bearing fruit: just like with advertisements, if you hear something over and over again, you eventually begin to believe it yourself.

SEPTEMBER '91

At the end of August and the beginning of September, debates are held about asylum policies. The Department of Justice and WVC have much input. The rights of asylum-seekers should be exchanged for quicker deportations; customs officers should decide on the Schengen boundary between Schiphol (Amsterdam's airport - ed.) and the country fled. Euphemistically this is dubbed "pre-flight control". Asylum-seekers are divided between those who have a chance of being granted asylum and those who don't. Luckily, not everything the government wanted has been put in place. There still are not separate refugee centers for those with a chance of being granted asylum and those without. But the policy has been pretty much pushed through nonetheless. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to provide reports on the countries that 'export' the most refugees, thus providing the Ministry of Justice with a stream of information to justify its asylum policy.

All-in-all, it became a non-debate. Lots of words, but little content, and as for a debate on the causes of flight and the results of deportation...forget it! By failing to develop any political vision, Dutch politicians have fallen victim to a tendency to develop wholly technocratic means of dealing with a serious problem. This also goes for the Dutch Fukuyama, Bolkestein. In an attempt to play the visionary, Bolk tried to define a refugee- and minority-policy for the future. With the fact that in the year 2010 about 34% of the Dutch population will be composed of minorities in the back of his head, he argues that white Western goods are universal and must, by definition, be given over to immigrants. He embodies the Western fear of a society with a large minority population. This large minority will want political rights; it will make economic demands and try to create its own rules in our democracy. In other words, it will leave its mark on this society which will necessarily differ from the liberal relief which Bolk would like to see in our Northern communities.

But with his appeal to the universality of Western white goods and his adapt-or-leave mentality he is, above all, trying to create a light in which the 'foreigner question' should be viewed in future. It's a clever attempt. It's trying to take the sting out of the debate surrounding asylum-seekers by positing a logical argument of just how many refugees Holland can stand to accept and just how those admitted to our country should conduct themselves.

Quotas of just how many foreigners can enter, combined with pressure to adapt to white laws and morals - that's the strategic concept of Bolkestein. And now Dales from the Ministry of Internal Affairs wants to take up this concept and organize a "broad social discussion" under the motto: "concerning you, without you".

OCTOBER '91

In France, Giscard d'Estaing tries to reel in Le Pen's right-wing influence, and he succeeds. By phasing in a "blood right" as opposed to a "constitutional right", France would be able to deprive migrants and refugees of all their rights.

In Germany, countless attacks take place on refugee centers and the homes of asylum-seekers. These attacks usually have the passive, and sometimes active, support of the population.

New streams of immigrants, added to the numbers of foreigners already in Germany, create lasting political problems for individual politicians and political parties, and this has dramatic results.

The politicians finally lose their moral qualms and shed their veneer of civility as more and more of Germany's pressing social problems get blamed on foreigners. Housing shortages; higher taxes;

soaring unemployment since the Reunification; all of this is being caused by the arrival of so many asylum-seekers, added to those refugees from the Three Continents already present. What better way to draw attention away from the CDU's failure to live up to its election promises! Promises which did not lead to the Reunification bringing about a paradise on Earth, but rather to the brutal reorganization of East Germany under the leadership of the Treuhander.

These same politicians who are themselves responsible for the pogroms against foreigners now turn around and blame the rising tide of hatred of foreigners on the Stalinist past of the East Germans. The fact that most of the racist attacks occur in West Germany is not mentioned.

It all can be traced back to the Stalinist past: it's their common brown past that neither the East nor the West Germans have reconciled themselves with. The Stalinism in the DDR had the same roots as fascism.

And now these same politicians again are trying to play down the brown stain on their blazon. They just see it as a bunch of 16-17 year olds getting a little out of hand as they vent their frustrations. Just give them a little spanking and everything will be OK. Too bad not more parents do this, but then, maybe they're too busy trying to survive in the paradise-jungle, or maybe they don't see it as a problem to begin with.

These politicians who would like to present Germany as a true (proven) democracy are the same ones who in our country utilize racism and hatred of foreigners as political tools with the greatest of ease. The following quotation from the *Sddeutsche Zeitung*...

"(...) In the meantime, attacks on foreigners occur almost daily. Nevertheless, German politicians continue to speak endlessly of 'fraudulent asylum-seekers'. Rather than curbing discussion, this just heightens the debate and makes it more poisoning (...)"

...certainly applies not only to German politicians. If you compare the recent statements by Wim Kok, Aad Kosto, Louis Toback, and Giscard d'Estaing, then the only thing that differs is the language they speak in; in all cases, the content is the same.

THE POTENTIAL

On November 13 there's yet another meeting of European Justice ministers. The goal of this meeting is to further harmonize the various European asylum policies.

For some time now, opinionated elements in the media have been asking the question, why is this cabinet, and Kosto in particular, seem so vehement in its campaign against foreigners and in its wishes for a white, controllable Europe?

From various sides it has even been suggested that the political establishment has gone a bit wild. Not that you see them zooming through the streets of the inner-cities, frothing at the mouth as they hunt down illegals - but you can see it in their eyes. The paranoia, the look that seems to tell the camera: "You all don't know what's going on! You all don't seem to understand, THEY'RE COMING!"

But their sense of reality hasn't totally lapsed into the paranoia which would cause them to actually say this. But we are slowly being drawn into their hysteria as they manipulate us with their sayings and their statistics as they try to convince us of their paranoid world-view.

And just like true politicians, they've made an art of their abnormality as they try to rob the population of reality. It almost leaves us breathless. We are seeing an entirely new interpretation of the social-democratic credo; this whole lot are taking the "potential of the society" literally! Only this doesn't mean protecting the weak or creating possibilities for those people on the bottom: this has all been erased by the new spirit. Not that all of this is that new, but its abruptness and absoluteness should be grounds for shame. What kind of society is it that, without a thought, can deny someone his every right to exist? In which those people who have worked themselves to death, suddenly get stuck on welfare and get treated like dirt?

The similarity between the attacks on (illegal) foreigners and on welfare recipients is that both groups are easy prey. The one because it helps relieve a general feeling of discomfort; and the other because it makes a good financial sacrifice in favor of the aggravated middle and higher incomes. But haven't the lower incomes always been the ones to pay? After all, who gave us our economic growth and productivity? Not the illegals, at best they can simply give (without rights) cheap labor; they are just used to keep production costs low, but this, as far as the State is concerned, doesn't mean they deserve any rights. And you'll never see their labor figured into any official statistics.

So this is the way to solve the administrative and political crisis; this is how Holland looks inside a united Europe.

THE NEW WORLD ORDER INSIDE THE PARLIAMENT

The historians of the future will kill themselves in trying to figure out how the growth of political xenophobia came about.

But here and now there are plenty of us trying hard to figure out how and why the rabid anti-refugee attitude of our politicians has come about; we're searching for a political rationale. But the very idea of the existence of a political rationale seems to underscore the notion that there's some logic behind it. A logic which can be reasonably struggled against, that is, with arguments. Something which should offer us hope at being able to influence the decision making process as it plays itself out inside the parliament. That would be nice. But the hysterical character of the refugee-phobia of the parliament and the government has surpassed the bounds of deliberative democracy. The decision makers don't offer up their 'product' for discussion. They mystify the 'product', their asylum-policies: the immigrant is a strange entity, outside of reality. It's the foreigner that everyone knows and points to and says he's good for nothing. The foreigner who has come to steal our food; to undermine our welfare system; the fool, huckster, prospective criminal, in short, a modern version of the archetype of the Eternal Jew. It's obvious that any open association with this idea is to be avoided; but it's just as obvious that that threat must be put forward as truly possible.

That goes as follows: Kosto hears from Van den Broek (Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs - ed.) that there's been a decision to harmonize asylum policies on a European level. But how do you sell that? Some suggestions are made at a council of ministers, some mumble about controlling the "problem", they read some reports from police commissioners; then they pick up the reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conclude: they had no reason to flee in the first place! The tone is set; the project can begin. Kosto goes to his office and meets with Nawijn (director of the refugee division). Things are moving along; both men agree that they need to come up with a policy that can be easily made to look good. Kosto gives his staff

of loyal, apolitical civil servants the order to develop a policy given the necessary statistics and foundations. Excited, the bureaucrats begin their work; improvisation and selective presentation have been the state of the art in policy making for years now.

But then one of them looks up in amazement; he double-checks the statistics and the reports, and he suddenly realizes it's all bull-shit. Mrs. Aalberts of the ministerial Scientific Research and Documentation Center hands in her resignation. She has broken a golden rule of the bureaucratic establishment: don't cast doubt upon the orders of your superior policy maker, and certainly don't make these doubts public.

But now we've described the political mechanism, but we still haven't dug up a political rationale. If this xenophobia, which has been elevated to a political style, were only limited to The Netherlands, then we might simply wonder if the food they're eating at the Binnenhof (the Dutch parliament - ed.) is OK, all the more so since they often use such dumb excuses themselves.

But there's really only one logic we can find, and that is the coming of European unity and the political crisis in general (both ideologically and administratively). If we look at it in this light, then we can see how these inexplicable happenings can come about. Such as their hard-headed defiance of all protests against welfare cut-backs. The caste of modern politicians could care less if corporatism, so carefully constructed in the 50's, is tossed on the garbage heap. The politicians are on a collision course with the unions and other organizations for the simple reason that there exists the concept of a modern state in a united Europe. When viewed in this light, it becomes clear why the European politicians dare to play with fire in their mobilization of right-wing extremist sentiments. Naturally it's better if foreigners are attacked (by groups of people only slightly higher than the foreigners themselves in the social hierarchy) that that riots should break out of neo-paupers demanding their share of the national welfare.

IT'S PAYTIME

The mother of all battles gave birth to a monster which is most difficult to grasp. It's called the New World Order and one third of the world is greeting it with elation; the rest with fear and trembling. The monster portrays an image of justice. Justice for the world. No country in the world will again seek to take what is not its own. Expansive dictatorships will be punished. Human rights are suddenly an issue when it comes to considering military intervention. The United Nations has obtained a self-proclaimed and dangerous policing power.

No one should have any illusions about what sort of role the US intends to play in this New World Order. The concept is as follows: wealthy nations that are threatened foot the bill for the military operations, with Japan in the background as permanent financier. Europe, in her role as the old continent, handled the diplomatic side of things; the US intervenes in accordance with its strategic interests. The New World Order is actually just the continuation of present-day international political and economic relations.

And that's why two thirds of the world are afraid. Military interventions by the North in the South aren't the beginnings of this process, but rather the climax. Military intervention by the North is simply another means of carrying out an economic policy. The beginnings of this war of the North against the South lie in economic policies.

So the crux of the matter is this: international politics decides the rules and limits of national policy-making.

As long as the conditions which lead to people fleeing their countries continue to exist, refugees will continue coming. Consequently the welfare gap between North and South will become bigger and bigger.

The continuing economic decline in countries in the South over the last few years has been one of the major causes of the flight of migrants and refugees. But there are difficulties if the person falls in the category of 'economic refugee'. That this has been noticed at high levels can be seen from the signs that have been given lately. Inside OESO circles there's being more thought put towards opposing migration. A good example of this think-tank is the US. The accord which the US hopes to sign with various South American nations contains a number of 'rules' which apply to refugees. The US would be required to invest a portion of its income in South America, on the condition that these nations see to it that they use these investments to stop the flood of refugees leaving those countries. But it's to be expected that these corrupt and half-feudal military regimes will not suddenly become 'enlightened' and seek ways to solve the 'social question'. The money will be used for more border patrols and more control of refugees - repression, thus.

IN PROGRESS

The problem:

State Secretary Kosto: "Our borders need to be open so that we can increase our wealth. Don't think that you can close them to people who hope to make a profit."

The solution:

State Secretary Kosto: "Wherever I can, I shall stem the tide of refugees entering our country, by turning away illegals, and by punishing those who try and bend the restrictions." (Elsevier, 12-10-91)

The refugee question seems trapped in ideological terms. It shuffles between the policy decisions in line with the coming of European unity, the reports from Foreign Affairs, and the eventual refusals of entry and deportations.

A policy with a signature but without a face. Put together at international conferences, and implemented by ever-loyal civil bureaucrats. Look at the Zeevalking Report. This commission (March '90) had the following task: "To give advice about stopping the use of collective resources by illegals residing in The Netherlands and about starting up a program of domestic refugee control."

The investigation resulted in proposals for an actively discouraging policy in all terrains and manners whereby illegals "support themselves". This includes excluding them from 'practically all' welfare benefits. 'Practically all' because "it can't be avoided that the illegals will make some use of the public sector." (page 19 of the report)

Refugees, thus, are degraded to non-existence. After the gloomy experience of leaving behind both hearth and home follows the systematic experience of humiliation. It doesn't matter what your story is, the pre-programmed bureaucrats still shove a deportation order in your face. If you make it past them, you still come up against a wall of hostility and mistrust. Your whole culture perishes. Any attempt to make a positive contribution towards a multi-cultural society is smothered.

It is this policy that dismisses people, that excludes and

dehumanizes them, that we wish to expose and stigmatize. That's why we visited the work-place where the diligent Justice Department bureaucrats daily build up this policy bit by bit, and that's why we visited one of those who is politically responsible for this. We wanted him to momentarily experience humiliation for himself. So we visited him at home; we damaged his property and invaded his privacy. He was himself turned out, you could say, albeit for just one night.

By exposing these people, we want to contribute to (the struggle for) an alternative and to move the discussions past their present positions.

No, of course The Netherlands can't accept all of the world's refugees. There are too many of them, and Holland is just too small a country. But every organization which itself begins by separating 'the wheat from the chaff', in the hope that in this way 'only genuine refugees' will come in, finds itself in the danger-zone. The definition of a 'genuine refugee' changes along with the political winds.

The point is, that along with war, environmental disasters, and sex-specific reasons, poverty must also be considered grounds for flight. The solution does not lie in the deportation of refugees, but in making fundamental changes in the international economic order. Towards that end:

- refugee policy must be taken out of the hands of the police, customs officials, and the Justice Department;

- refugees must not be forcibly placed in camps, they must not be guarded, and we must scrap Article 18a which makes it possible to intern refugees;

- refugees must be allowed free access to all necessary financial, judicial, social, educational, and medical resources.

BOUNDARIES

The political situation at this moment is screaming for a clear answer. The increase in race-hatred in Western Europe is being shoved in the faces of migrants and refugees; there's too many of them and they don't want to integrate, so say the officials.

The political policy-makers are sewing the seeds to make more fertile ground for them to utilize hatred of foreigners to harvest a passive approval of their general politics. The so-called coorrectness of the right is directly proportional to the weakness of the left, and politicians in the middle are using right-wing sentiments to realize things which would otherwise cause too much resistance. We ourselves are very much aware of the weakness of the left at this time. We are conscious of the lack of a common political project and a subsequent strategy. And while the left here in the West has suffered great setbacks, we realize as well that our comrades in the rest of the world have had to adjust to shifts in the balance of power. Old answers no longer apply, but the questions remain the same. In the seventies it was still true that the most significant developments were executed in the liberation struggles on the Three Continents, but now we see their position severely weakened, and the Cuban, Vietnamese, and Palestinians peoples seem wholly isolated since the collapse of the East Bloc.

We aren't mourning the failure of revolution from above; the changing of society by decree; the belief in the ease of changing history just by having a couple of people announce that history is over, the sum-total of certainties.

There are definite certainties. There is the certainty that progress for the West (or rather, the North) means a decline for the South (and at present, the East). And there are others. But what we

can't do is immediately attach a certain politics or moral to this. The waves of '68 have certainly passed, and in fact are now flowing in reverse. The reaction is now in control, and everything which the left had made taboo for discussion is once again being discussed. Suddenly, everyone thinks it's reasonable to make demands of refugees; you can call them profiteers and bums without being placed in the same category as Janmaat (head of a Dutch neo-fascist party - ed.), Prins Bernhard, or Joseph Luns. Ten years ago, the thought of invading Suriname was just one of Frans Weisglas' wet dreams, but now it doesn't seem like just a fantasy.

If you translate history into the question, What has gone wrong with the revolutionary and radical left in Europe?, then the answer must be that we have too long held faith in the correctness of the left and neglected the middle which is now reaping the political successes. The masters of compromise, in the center of power, have time and time again succeeded in making social developments go their way. Sometimes with deception and cunning, like with the cruise-missiles and the broad social discussion on nuclear energy. Sometimes with bloody violence as part of a complicated psychological strategy, like in Italy (the bombing in Bologna) and in West Germany in the fall of '77 (the Stammheim murders).

The belief in the certainty of (militant) left-wing correctness has led to important political terrains being left to the forces of the middle and those only slightly to the left. So, for example, a united Europe could be really significant for the left since many artificial borders and now being put in question. A united Europe of peoples would stand in direct contrast to a united Europe of multinationals. One of the most important weak-points of 'the middle' is the democratic legitimacy of the system which they represent. And no referendum or 'social renewal' can hide the fact that they are headed for big problems. Step by step, the forces of the middle will be pushed back, and for us, this is one such step. We want, along with all others involved, to turn around these politics, to ask questions that aren't being asked, and to pull at the boundaries.

Even we don't have 'the' answer, but what we do know is that we don't want to be part of a society wherein a large portion of the population is pushed aside and denied all rights. Meanwhile, the silent majority are made complicit by their inactivity.

The only solution lies in a common fight for a different future. That can and must be achieved in many ways.

With these actions, which we see as necessary counter-violence, we have sought to add our contribution in the direction of fundamental change.

**Revolutionary
Anti-
Racist
Action**

After a Long Silence...
An Interview with RARA

Why the interview?

We have been rather silent for quite some time. But during that time, we have had a number of discussions about current political perspectives and the changing situation in the world and in The Netherlands.

We were faced with the choice of communicating in our usual manner through communiques, or to find another format which would make it easier to get into these matters. We chose this format because it gives us an opportunity to discuss contemporary situations. At the same time it gives us a chance to go into more depth on issues which we find most important. The present situation is wretched. The radical/revolutionary debate is dulled, fragmented, and without orientation. This is especially true in the countries in the northern hemisphere. We find it important to add a contribution to the discussion and to open a dialogue with people who have not yet lost their will to fight, despite the fact that the end of history and the end of ideology have been proclaimed.

Why have things been quiet for so long?

There are several reasons for this, but the main one we'd like to mention is the fact that we needed some time to analyze what exactly has changed and to see what conclusions we should and shouldn't link to our praxis. When we speak of changes we mean the acute deepening of the crisis on the left, the lack of direction of the left, and the changing perspective.

In what sense has the perspective changed?

The 'victory' of capitalism over socialism seems so overwhelming that many people in the North seem to have forgotten that capitalism itself is now in a period of crisis. Because despite all the praise being showered on the social-market economy, the contradictions are growing in the northern hemisphere. The explosive situation of the Black population in the US is more than a false note in this panegyric. Things which seemed almost at hand ten years ago are now mere topics of discussion. The content of leftist politics in particular has become totally watered down. In the seventies, the Left was still concerned with changing the entirety of social relationships, both nationally and internationally. Now the Left has retreated into "debating the big questions."

This is evident when one looks at Groen Links [the Green Left party - ed.] in The Netherlands, and even when one looks at Die Grunen in Germany. Leftist politics has become a vague mixture of social individualization with a little dab of life-style politics on top. The Left no longer has any vision with regard to international relations. In the seventies and eighties, a big concern was supporting the countries in the southern

hemisphere in their fight to get an equitable distribution of welfare by means of the "new international economic order", and yet now everyone's behind the "new world order" of Bush and Co., especially given the way things lined up during the Gulf War. And people who are considered pretty well-thinking, such as Anet Bleich and Wolf Biermann, become the 'new experts' of international politics, seemingly overnight.

With the analytical capacity to barely distinguish a mouse from an elephant, they have reduced the entire (history of) the Gulf War to one question: for or against Israel?

But the crisis of the leftist perspective can't just be reduced to mistakes made by the Left. There are also external causes. Seemingly there exists a connection between increasing welfare and the extreme individualism of so many people. Saving the world is 'out', personal concerns are 'in'. Is there hunger in Africa? Well then, let's throw a benefit. Typhoon in Bangladesh? Where's my check-book...

Welfare and individualism lead to life-style politics. You're not a leftist because the world is unjust, rather you're liberal or progressive because you find it all a bit of a drag, poverty and hunger, and the plight of illegal aliens. The things you find depressing are fed to you through the media and are determined by an issue or an event which is still a little bit worse than the event from the week before.

A world-view which consumes human suffering during a concert for the Kurds (or was it for Bangladesh?)...oh well, no matter, as long as my hair looked cool. Post-modern society is structured through a denial of what is real. The truth can't be found in the political market-place, because it's not a marketable product.

It is this psycho-social structure which makes people so soft. Because of the lightning-fast developments of the past few years, the crisis on the Left has been at the same time social and individual. Everyone knows someone who feels that they have fought, struggled, and sacrificed enough so that they can now end their political lives. And each successive political suicide eats away at your own motivation to keep on going.

The simultaneous occurrence of both the individual and the societal identity crisis within the Left is making it very difficult to catch sight of any possible solutions. Nevertheless we would like to stress that our motivation for going on is not only fed by the fact that we are paralyzed by existential indignation, or more simply put, 'there is more, folks!'.

To say something worthwhile about all this, it would be handy for us to take a look around us. Already a few years ago we made a change in our political praxis. Initially, our struggle against racism and oppression was spearheaded by our attacks against apartheid policies. Gradually we began to focus on refugee politics in The Netherlands. From out of our history, this was a logical step.

Firstly, this is so because we think that a space for fundamental changes in the West itself needs to be fought for.

Secondly, because refugee politics is directly related to open, latent, and institutionalized racism. The migration strain in the North is not a result of the so-called parasitic conduct

of economic refugees, unlike what many 'people' would have us believe. We reject that notion, because in the first place it is pure propaganda. It's primary purpose is to play on the average Dutchman's fear of having his wallet emptied. Labour migration has taken place for centuries, and it would be wrong to say that Europe has been opposed to it and has not needed it.

The authorities simply want to dictate which migrants can enter and which can't. Europe for the Europeans.

Refugees don't come here for the fun of it. They are fleeing poverty, war, (sexual) repression, and hunger. And each of these are political concerns which we want to work around. And coincidentally they represent what for us is an important element, namely, internationalism.

So do you all see the possibility or the necessity of militant politics? In other words, is militant resistance still legitimate?

We see legitimacy in militant politics because militant politics is a means of politicizing certain issues which can't be immediately recognized out of humanitarian concerns.

Just like others, we have analyzed the coming European Unity as a junction in developments, a junction which consequently must be confronted. But where we saw and still see little perspective is to direct our praxis "Against the Europe of Capital" [a slogan of the Dutch anti-Europe '92 campaign - ed.]. Not because we are for this, but because we realize all too well that you can't base a political praxis from political analyses alone.

You can't offer resistance to abstractions.

In other words, such a praxis could be counter-productive because then you tend to see resistance where it does not exist. We believe that alongside an analysis of current developments there must also be an analysis of political relationships, and from out of these two things you can choose your targets and formulate your praxis.

But who are you directing yourselves at then? Where do you see people who have an interest in bringing about radical changes? Who do you hope to mobilize with your actions?

?  We don't have a simple answer to that question. We could be ask that question as easily as you. If you mean, do we see a political movement where our actions have had or could have an effect, a movement which we could mobilize, then our answer at this time would be a cautious "No". But that is closely connected to a subject which we have chosen. Unlike with the anti-apartheid struggle, refugees here don't have any powerful political lobby or solidarity movement. And likewise unlike with the anti-apartheid struggle, refugee politics can't be simply reduced to economic or political interest groups. The whole of refugee politics is couched in ideological terms. It vacillates between policy statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which almost always state that nothing is wrong in our country) and bureaucratic officials whose only measure of the current refugee

situation is the listing of criteria in their computers. But quite a lot is happening in this area and we think that this can, in principle, grow out into a powerful solidarity movement with political influence. The basis for this is present. The people at present concerned how The Netherlands handles refugees don't, for the most part, come from the 'know' movements, such as the squatters', anti-militarist, and anti-apartheid movements. Often it is people from church parishes, people who possess a genuine sense of concern and indignation. They also don't seem as caught up in the Left's identity crisis.

Our praxis isn't primarily concerned with winning these people over to a revolutionary perspective. Our praxis is an attempt and a struggle to regain some ideological ground. Right now, some very detailed societal measures (such as the implementation of the Schengen Agreement with its consequences for, among others, refugees) are being silently enacted without any discussions of any importance. Through our praxis we hope to bring a halt to the giving up of ideological standpoints.

You all orient yourselves against the State. Do you see the State as 'all-powerful'? Isn't it rather the case that the State, society, and politics are so interwoven that it's impossible to attack the State alone?

Yes, that's the case if you analyze power sociologically. But we're not so concerned with giving an explanation of this phenomenon and how it has come about. We view that power of the State as a political circumstance. We don't see the State as a monolithic power-block, as people did in the seventies. Rather we see it as a centre of spheres of influences of political and economic interest groups which can at times be in conflict with one another. Just look at the conflict between Kosto and the Mulder Commission. Kosto doesn't want any statement of the rights of refugees. That would of course mean compliance with any European ruling and that could lead to a judicial strengthening of the position of refugees. Kosto wants a repressive refugee policy while Mulder has stuck with the more 'polite' orders given to him by Lubbers.

The conflict between the Council of State and the governing parties over the Schengen Agreement is another example.

But we don't orient ourselves against the State because of its 'power'. We orient ourselves against it because it is the most important tool in the hands of the political-economic elite. And certainly where refugees policies are concerned, the state is our biggest opponent.

Because the character of the State has changed, we are presented with some new opportunities. Precisely because of the fact that most people's perception of the State has changed presents the politicians within the State with big problems. One of these problems is that traditional forms of authority (including the State) have been seriously eroded. The State has to continually justify its directives and policies to the population. Truly, the State is in a permanent state of ideological crisis. That is the flip-side of welfare and

individualism, authority has to justify and prove itself continually. Consequently, they often find themselves in a bind, and they have to try to claim that certain special-interest matters (such as European Unity) are in fact in the common interest.

That's why, if there is no reason to carry out a repressive refugee policy, then they have to create one. And there lies the vulnerability of the modern State. Matters such as policy and politics have become susceptible to market mechanisms. And if the State is on the defensive ideologically, then there is more 'space'.

But all of this does not mean that there aren't some drawbacks to our focusing on the State. Although racism is such a comprehensive issue, we are merely able to take it on in one of its forms. But for the time being, that's how things have to be.

The last question, why haven't you all done anything about the Gulf War?

There is a difficult balance between rage and political rationality. We were hard at work and had gotten to quite an advanced stage. But if you work as we do, then you can't simply react spontaneously. Our manner of operations requires a long period of preparation time, time which the developments of the Gulf War did not give us. And what really settled things was the completely absurd reaction of the Left to this war. From the time the first Scuds landed on Israel, the Left in The Netherlands ceased thinking and became implicit in the ruling powers' Gulfomania and Arabophobia.

That, and the fact that so little resistance to the Gulf War was forthcoming from the Left, decided for us how we would go about things. It is just this sense of political rationality that forces you to examine the possible effect of your limited methods. You don't gain anything with an attack if the attack only inflicts material damage and has no political effect. And after the political demobilization of the Left with respect to the Gulf War, we saw insufficient means of having any political effect. Undoubtedly we would have had an effect if we had carried out our plans, but the question was, wouldn't we instead have effected a negative polarization, given the fact that the whole conflict was reduced to the issue of for or against Israel, and we had no desire to further this debate. Like we said earlier, our actions are designed to influence the political agenda. And among the preconditions for this is a continuity of praxis, to thematize about certain problems in a way which no one can ignore. That sounds like a separate goal, but it is the result of our analysis of contemporary political relations in The Netherlands. It is actually less defensive than it sounds, although there is a defensive side to it. We're concerned with keeping a finger on society's political pulse during this transition period from the Cold War to the New World Order and the formation of the European powerblock and the continual depoliticization of societal questions in The Netherlands. At the present time, as this system is aggressively developing itself

throughout the world and is becoming accepted as purely rational here in the North, we see our sort of militant resistance as dealing a blow to the ideological hegemony of the political and economic elite. And for the time being, that is our strategy.

Revolutionary
Anti
Racist
Action

The Political Agenda

A Reaction to RARA

With this piece, we'd like to start a discussion about the ideas and actions of RARA within the framework of developing a revolutionary line in The Netherlands and in Europe as a whole.

We think that the revolutionary left in Holland is in great need of such a discussion. On the one side, we are confronted with outright dismissals from the entire spectrum from Dr. van Leeuwen, through [some opinions expressed in] NN (a Dutch bi-weekly autonomist periodical - ed.), and to a number of established refugee organizations, and on the other side, the ideas which RARA bring forward (in the interview in *Konfrontatie* No. 1 and in the recent communique) are hardly critically examined and further developed. So the actions are left suspended in mid-air. Either people like them, or they don't like them, but in any case, nothing happens, except that the CRI and the BVD (Dutch intelligence agencies - ed.) continue to do their thing, and we're left with the ruling class shouting: "This shouldn't happen!"

Well, we think it should!

In this piece, we won't discuss the necessity of such attacks, but rather the political motivations which lead to such actions.

We think it's important at this time to develop a political line on the basis of which structural racism (that is, those who benefit from and control the oppressive apparatus), and, through this, all oppression can be stopped. We see RARA's contributions as fitting into such a framework, and it is in this context that we have formulated our critique.

Crisis

"Even we don't have *the* answer," says RARA. Well, neither do we, but then that's impossible (right now). *The* answer can only be developed in a collective struggle, in fact, *the* answer *is* this common carrying out of the struggle. But this requires a correct estimation of the strengths and developments of both the other side and of ourselves.

As for this point, we have some criticisms to make of RARA.

In both the interview and in the latest communique, RARA talk about the crisis of the other side:

"The State has to continually justify its measures and policies to the population. In fact, the State is in a permanent state of ideological crisis." (from "After a Long Silence...")

"On the most significant weak points of the 'the center' is the democratic legitimacy of the system which they represent. And no referendum or 'social renewal' can hide the fact that they are big trouble." (from the recent communique)

We don't think the other side is in a state of crisis. For years, the Vietnam-syndrome and the naked existence of 'real-existing socialism' were guarantees against large-scale military interventions by the imperialist powers. But the US-invasion of Grenada was the first-step towards regaining military, political, and ideological hegemony. By the time the US had invaded Panama and kidnapped its president, Latin America in particular had become almost totally silent. And everyone focussed their attention on the collapse of 'barbarism', the fall of 'real-existing socialism', especially the coup in Romania. With the removal of all buffers between the two power-blocks, that is, when the 'East Bloc' was subsumed into the capitalist world order, the way was made clear for the New World Order. Plans could be made for the Gulf War, which was carried out without a hitch. Many former Vietnam demonstrators stood on the sidelines and cheered on this 'clean' war, in which 'luckily' just 150,000 Iraqis bit the dust.

[As far as The Netherlands is concerned], one point over which the system's legitimacy could have been called into question was the threatened placement of cruise missiles [in the mid-'80's], and this example shows that it's just impossible to speak of a lessening of faith in the legitimacy of the system. Despite the fact that a majority of the population opposed the stationing of the missiles and took to the streets to demonstrate this fact, the decision to accept the missiles was made nonetheless. The result was definitely not that the system itself was called into question; at best, people compared the Cabinet to a bull in a china shop. But even this was quickly forgotten.

Also at that time, a large part of the population had expectations of influencing the political decision-making process with regard to welfare and health-care reductions. Despite all the anger people felt, that fact that most actions were essentially defensive in nature showed that most people had already accepted the decisions as given.

By speaking of a 'crisis', we are lead towards a political miscalculation, namely that militant politics *at this point in time* can influence the political agenda. Only from such a perspective can we comprehend RARA's disappointment (in their communique) at the lack of a debate. "Lots of words, little substance, and as for a fundamental debate about the real causes and consequences, there is none at all." Well, what did RARA expect? That the parliament would suddenly start discussing revolutionary leftist positions?

Only a structured counter-power with a definite global political line and strategy can influence the political agenda. At what is significant about both RARA texts is that a discussion of just such a counter-power is not to be found.

The estimations of the differences and contradictions within the ranks of the other side (which there certainly are) we find too optimistic. With such an important matter as asylum-seekers at hand, the demands of the Fortress Europe cause the right-wing to consolidate its ranks. What do you mean debate? Fuck debate! It seems the other side has a definite political vision, namely that of Bolkestein: a certain number of ('real') refugees may enter to keep up our humanitarian image, but they have to adapt themselves to white, Western European values (which Bolkestein asserts are universal and eternal). So RARA's assertion that the other side lacks of political vision is simply not true, in our opinion, and this assertion represents an underestimation of our opponents.

North-South

We are not opposed to tactical choices, but we also think that, especially in a time when the revolutionary left is weak, that fundamental choices and strategic principles have to be stressed. Only within this framework can the chosen tactics have their desired effect.

We'd like to now make some comments on RARA's demands for fundamental changes in the international economic order. "Take refugee politics out of the hands of the police, the customs department, and the Department of Justice." So that, of course, brings up the question: And give it to whom? To organizations like VVN (the Dutch Refugee Association - ed.) or Humanitas? Both of these groups are completely fenced in and act as objective extensions of structural racism and the Dutch State. (We don't mean to attack the individuals who work for these organizations; our criticism is aimed at these organizations' political line and structure). In France, refugee policies aren't in the hands of the police or customs agents or the justice department, but in the hands of groups like VVN and Humanitas, and the same racist practices are to be seen. One of pillars of this structural racism, namely the distinction between economic ('profiteering') and political ('real') refugees, is left unchallenged by both of these organizations. We think that one of the primary demands of anti-racist groups must be to scrap this false distinction.

Further, we think it's wise, from a tactical standpoint, to issue demands that aren't too difficult to understand within the existing order and which are offensive enough to force a discussion about the causes of racism and Eurocentrism, like demanding open borders for all, with consequently equal rights for all.

In addition to the question of counter-power, we think that RARA don't stress the issue of North-South relations enough.

By exploiting and destroying the way of life of the people of the Three Continents, the North causes a steady 'flood' of refugees from the South who are then stopped at our borders. Until the middle of the '70's, imperialism utilized lots of people as 'temporary migrant workers' to secure industrial profits and to carve out its portion of the world system. But lots of restrictions were put in place, like the WABW (the Law on Foreign Worker Labor - ed.) which coupled a woman's right to remain in the country on a man's ability to stay and work and which made family-uniting measures very restrictive. The WABW provided strict controls and allowed for increased exploitation of foreign workers. A limit was placed on each company; labor permits were issued to the boss, not the laborer himself; at each request for work, a search was first done among available Dutchmen, then among other EEC citizens, and then finally among legally-residing foreigners, and so on. If unemployed for more than six months, a refugee was deported. And these same migrant workers, as soon as they were no longer needed, became labelled economic refugees. This is the North's structural racism. If this racism isn't clearly pointed out, then there's a good chance that anti-racist actions will merely be seen as criticizing the State's present refugee policies, rather than attacking the problem's fundamental roots.

In the last few years, an increasing number of refugees arriving in The Netherlands have come from countries which used to have 'real-existing socialism'. The West caused this stream of refugees by applying economic and military pressure - and even this was only possible after 500 years of colonialism and imperialism at the cost of the peoples of the Three Continents - to a system which could finally no longer bear the burden and finally collapsed. The West has since just concerned itself with opening up more free-markets and insuring that the nuclear weapons are in safe hands, but the interests of the local people are hardly ever considered. This new phase of development and variant of imperialism does not have the same form as the structured North-South racism which has developed over the last 500 years, since its main basis is a difference in production methods (centralized, ordered economies versus private property).

Self-Undermining

The exploitation of the South by the North is mentioned by RARA, but is buried in the interview. And in the communique, RARA says: "The continuing negative economic growth in the nations of the South over the last few years is one of the most important causes of the arrival of migrants and refugees." This is all they say about Eurocentrism!

We think that, in addition to underestimating the other side, that one could also speak of, let's say, the 'self-undermining' of RARA. No longer are North-South relations spoken of as central parts of 500 years of colonialism and imperialist exploitation, no longer is RARA concerned with winning people over to a revolutionary perspective, no longer is RARA interested in building up a counter-power, no longer is RARA trying to build ideological hegemony, but rather they just fight for ideological space, no longer is RARA struggling for fundamental change, but merely for space for fundamental change. It's also interesting that the Green Left got criticised in the interview as a means of exposing the failing of social democracy, but it's still not clear who RARA are aiming this point at. How can you talk about the 'crisis on the left' and at the same time 'not have the answer'? Can't at least some fundamental observations be brought forward? In our opinion, RARA don't focus enough on revolutionary standpoints, but instead are fixated on the 'political agenda', the 'center', and so on.

We'd also like to say that we don't share RARA's opinion concerning actions which could potentially have been carried out during the Gulf War (see the interview). If these had led to the question "For or against Isreal?", then at least a break-point would have

been reached, and a much-needed discussion could have begun. If this couldn't take place during the Gulf War, then when can it?

And here again, the canonization of tactics at the expense of the strategic notion that the standpoints of the revolutionary left need to be introduced precisely *at those times* when they are relevant to current discussions and in a manner which then causes these discussions to be taken further.

We'll leave it at that.

For the sake of clarity: we are not opposed to the recent RARA attacks. Attacks on dehumanizing policies are necessary to expose that fact that oppression is not some unassailable machine, but has a name and an address, that it can be hit, and that resistance is possible. That fact that so little attention was paid to *why* Kosto was attacked doesn't change this. Nor does the fact that the supposed lack of concern in the communique for what in reality happened has caused RARA to be described by some as an irresponsible, life-endangering group.

And despite all of our criticisms of their texts, we are glad that RARA took a stand concerning its praxis and political line.

This is, at the same time, a self-criticism, but one we gladly accept. We see this piece of ours as a partial working-out of this criticism.

- some anti-racist folks, a few of whom have high school diplomas

THUNDER CLAP: A Critique of RARA's Recent Actions

Something good can be said for the RARA bomb-throwers. Finally, another action. What an enormous bang, and what rumors!

The strangest effect was that although the shock-waves were great, they passed away within the shortest time: the media was all over the issue for a day, and then it was over. The same was true in the bars. The thunder clap not only came out of a clear, blue sky, but it also landed in a desert. The bombs accentuated the fact that no one and nothing is moving anymore. The Netherlands has become a political desert, a few nomads here and there, but for the most part nothing but boring sand. This fact makes the material choice of RARA that much more sensational. Maybe they can't do much considering the landscape in which they have to work, but then again, maybe they should have taken this into consideration.

The Means

First some neutral observations. We can learn from the fact that if you set off two bombs and one is really spectacular (it nearly blew away a little cottage house in a small town, in Holland of all places!), then naturally the other bomb will tend to get overlooked. The just as powerful bomb that exploded at the ministry was hardly made mention of. The only thing of interest was that it may have been placed at the wrong building. We're of this opinion; we mean the bomb at the Kostos' newly-renovated little house. August (Kosto's cat - ed.) stole the show, but RARA could do nothing about that. Leave it to Kosto and the press to find something like that to focus on. If not that, then they'd have come up with a displaced neighbor on crutches or something. If we may be so free as to summarize the remarks - one can hardly call them discussions - of the left-radical scene, then the overwhelming conclusion is that everyone thought the theme (asylum-policies) and the target (the responsible state secretary) were fine - "sure, why not?" - but that the chosen means were questionable. We pretty much agree with this, but then, we also wonder what other goals might have been better within the same sphere. The bomb temporarily over-shot its goal. The blast was so immense that the media - who still, to a great degree, dictate discussions - focussed only on the spectacle. Would the house have to be torn down? Funny, Kosto said, just as he and his wife were getting a drink in town, he heard a distant boom... Very little mention was made in the press about the communique, and all they could do was fill a few lines about the state secretary's ("humane") asylum policies, and they easily found spokesmen to stand up and defend Kosto's record. So the media pick up on things and follow through, and you should know this, and you can influence this. Before you decide on a blast, realize that arguments will hardly be weighed. So there's much to be said for the theory that a less spectacular action might have had more effect, and so the question arises: why is this so? If you decided to single out this man to address this theme, then why not, um, well,...burn his car? Or a hit-and-run action, where you burst into his house and smash all the windows? Or a less powerful bomb, one which just fucked up some windows and messed up his kitchen? Surely these options must have been considered, and yet the communique makes no mention as to why this third most severe form of action (behind kidnapping and murder) was legitimate. Then you wouldn't have had everyone making such a fuss about his cat, and more people would have thought about the issue, provided, of course, that you carried out the action well and that less attention was placed on the attack itself. What we're talking about here is what exactly the practical meaning of the action was.

The press statement only mentioned something about wanting to force Kosto out of his home, along with some little generalities like "we want, along with everyone involved, to turn this politics around by asking questions which aren't being asked, and by pulling at the boundaries." But the question of why this particular method remains unanswered. One might even ask if it wouldn't have been even more effective to throw a big cream pie in the man's face during a press conference with lots of cameras present. You would have gotten lots of publicity and no one would have felt sorry for him, and you could have launched a discussion in which even more moderate elements might have felt comfortable in offering harsh criticisms of the man, instead of all the pathetic crap you hear now from the Green Left, refugee organizations, and the like. Above all, you might even have set the stage for more direct action, whereas now the vanguard has already given the definitive answer.

The Strategy

So here's the strategy behind this tactic:

Considering that we find ourselves in a political desert at the moment, initiatives are necessary, both considering general apathy and the specific problems we're facing (refugee policies, racism, European unity). The bomb attacks were just such an initiative, but the question remains - and it must be asked - if they will have a positive effect. If they get a movement going (on the streets, on paper, in people's minds), or if they get a fruitful discussion going, then we're all for it. But if they're just kicking a dead horse, if the actions scare people off and discussions dwindle down to nothing, then they were a mistake. It's that simple, and everyone can make such a 'cost-benefit analysis', and since such an attack has ramifications for the entire left, everyone should talk about such things. Don't be put off by people saying, "Well, no one else is doing anything, so shut up." Publishing a bi-weekly action-paper is one example of a necessary initiative given desert-like surroundings.

Apart from all of this, we want to know why this theme should all of a sudden be central. RARA also makes little mention of this in their communique. Sure, they say how bad everything which Kosto says is, but they don't say what makes it all so bad that they had to go pull out some bombs from their closet (rather than for poisoned ground water, or the exploitation of women, or the murder of the Kurds, or gentrification, or muzak in supermarkets). Surely our comrades think about these issues as well. We assume they were motivated by a genuine, deep-seated concern for the rising tide of racism and murderous asylum-policies. But we're also worried that maybe they're using the refugees as 'baby seals', because they can be used to show that those in power are at fault, since this can no longer be done through ideology. Refugees are coming here, of course, because the wars which imperialism sews the seeds for drive them here, even if (pardon us) we can no longer put it in those terms. The relationship between activists and thematics is already problematic, becuase the action can change the situation of the refugees. It can improve conditions, or it can worsen them. RARA has chosen to polarize the issue, and there is something to be said for this approach, but there are also arguments against it. There's no guarantee that such an isolated occurrence might not result in a racist backlash, of which refugees and people of color will feel the harsh effects. On the other hand, no one is served by silence either, except for those in control.

The Communique

Now it's time to go over the communique. First of all, who cares if it's long? The first impression that one gets is that it reads very well. You can count on one hand the number of sentences which leave the average reader scratching his head. Furthermore, lots of things are brought up which are worth thinking about. And with a closer reading, it really gnaws at you.

The BVD and the HP (Dutch intelligence agencies - ed.) outdid themselves in complementing how intelligent the statement was. The first part entitled 'Chronology' consists of both foreign and domestic examples of racism becoming more and more entrenched in both society and government. Although the examples are chosen pretty much at random, you still get a good picture of Holland's asylum-policies. Then they look for a rationale behind this policy, and this is really sensational. They actually start psychoanalyzing. RARA thinks that the present pogrom against foreigners is to be explained by a real existing state of paranoia/angst in the minds of those in positions of power. The manner of Kosto ("and his cohorts") stems from a deluded vision of a world with lots of 'foreigners' in Holland/Western Europe. Only they won't come out and say this. So RARA has taken a step to reveal this world conspiracy theory, something easy to get the radical-left onto. The politics are no longer divided between the public theatre and the hidden, actual power. No, the blame is definitively placed with the government and the members of parliament and the only plot is that they won't tell us the whole story, or - and what could be more democratic? - they aren't putting forward any real policy at all. Although this analysis is somewhat more bland than the "anti-imperialist" line we'd grown so used to (in which everything is inter-connected, although we admit that even in the past, RARA's statements had little in common with 'guerrilla communiques' from other countries), nevertheless their words have grown a lot more fluffy. ... They are philosophizing rather than explaining, and we found ourselves wishing for something we'd never thought we'd ever ask for: give us a little more old-fashioned anti-imperialism, please! It would make things clearer! Right now the thing's like a puzzle, which cause goes with which effect, and so on. ... The fact that the refugee situation is the result of the North's exploitative policies in the Third World was something that got buried in the communique. What RARA do say is that race-hatred is taking on such alarming forms in Europe that something has to be done, but this is no more than a half-hearted justification for planting a bomb.

The statement's conclusion was also disappointing. Here, the philosophizing gets right out of hand, and there's nothing left to grasp hold of. But now we see what they're getting at, for this isn't ideology, and it's not real philosophy either, no, for now we're walking on moral ground! The index finger points in a friendly yet serious manner, not only at the outside world, but also at our own individual consciences. The far-left has always had a bit of this, but now that's all that remains. Maybe that's the spirit of the age, people all of a sudden start moralizing about everything, we liberate animals, half the city stops at a red light on their bicycles - but is this really progress?

"Even we don't have 'the' answer..." they write. No, we'd already begun to see that. "That's why we throw a bomb once a year," they might have written next. It's interesting that they remark on the fact that we've "too long held faith in the correctness of the left", but if you stop to consider who has really had a fundamental faith in the infallibility of the left all these years...yep, it's groups like RARA that have thought that way! What's more, nowhere in the communique does RARA suggest what we ought to do next. There's no strategy, not

for the left, nor for the world in general. In this sense, the statement is like all past ones, boring. One could almost believe what some guy said on the TV, that RARA must have accidentally found a really large bomb and wanted to use it. Or maybe they thought that they'd written such a nice piece of prose that they needed an impressive action to force everyone to read it.

No, just as with big and small decisions, there was probably a whole load of thoughts and emotions which went into the action.

Because the statement is so out of the ordinary for RARA, and because they had stated in their interview in Konfrontatie that they weren't going to throw any bombs (did they really say this? - ed.), some have speculated that maybe some other group did this action and used RARA's name. Some have even suggested provocateurs, or a BVD-action (or maybe even the Christian Democrats, who come off unscathed in the communique). Bullshit, we say. If this were true, then the old RARA could have distanced themselves from the action. But if we assume it was a leftist action, then it doesn't matter who did it, so sure as hell don't talk about it in the bars or in your livingroom, because the BVD (Dutch FBI - ed.) would like that very much.

The doubts do reveal a definite sore spot, though. This sort of illegal, clandestine action is naturally uncontrollable and authoritarian. In almost all countries there have been examples of infiltration and provocations, and always with regrettable consequences. The extra-left has a bad memory when it comes to this, never wanting to remember its fuck-ups. We're not saying any of this applies to the RARA action, but all of this has to be considered in a discussion about the choice of tactics.

Bombs are, to moralize for just a moment, by definition as little revolutionary in and of themselves as are balaclavas. It's easy to run around and use them. We just want to end by saying that RARA seem to be forgetting that you need to be active with lots of people. Mass-militance: the sure thing.

The Charlie Pan Writing Collective

(Charlie was Peter's spoiled little brother. Unlike Peter, he didn't get to be a Walt Disney character, rather he defected to the Viet Cong and was subsequently ignored in the press. But eventually he was taken back on board, as a boat-refugee, after the battle with the pirate Captain Hook. He also refused to become an adult.)